

# **Digital Marketing BUSI4484**

## **Spring 2024 – 2025**

### **Digital Marketing Coursework:**

### **Digital Market Audit Strategic Plan for**

### ***Reebok***

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## Purpose Statement

The purpose of this report is to provide an audit for Reebok's current digital marketing scheme and to provide a strategic plan for future implementation. Reebok hopes to reach new audiences, grow revenue, and solve some of their existing business strategy issues as they relate to digital marketing, as they cannot seem to get an edge over their competitors. As Reebok is planning to reorganize their company using digital strategy as the driver for change, it is the aim of this report to first provide a critical evaluation of Reebok's current digital presence and to identify how it currently compares to its closest competitors. Second, this report will implement a strategic web development proposal that will include strategies that aim to bolster Reebok above its current foothold in online retail. Finally, managerial objectives will be outlined, and Key Performance Indicators will be identified in order to assess the success of this operation and to keep new key metrics in-house to continually foster growth that will be spurred by implementation of these new strategies.

## Critical Evaluation of Reebok's Current Digital Presence

### *A brief introduction to Reebok*

Reebok was founded in the UK in 1958. It is a global athletic footwear and apparel company that has seen major growth in the last 60 years of operation. Now part of privately held Authentic Brands Group, Reebok generates over \$1.5 billion in annual revenue and operates in more than 80 countries (Byers 2021). Reebok was originally known for pioneering comfortable, high tech running shoes and aerobic fitness gear, but they now focus on fitness-oriented products, including training, CrossFit, and lifestyle sneakers as well as apparel. Over time, the brand has shifted from performance sports to a blend of athletic and streetwear, reflecting changing consumer trends and repositioning itself in the competitive sportswear market.

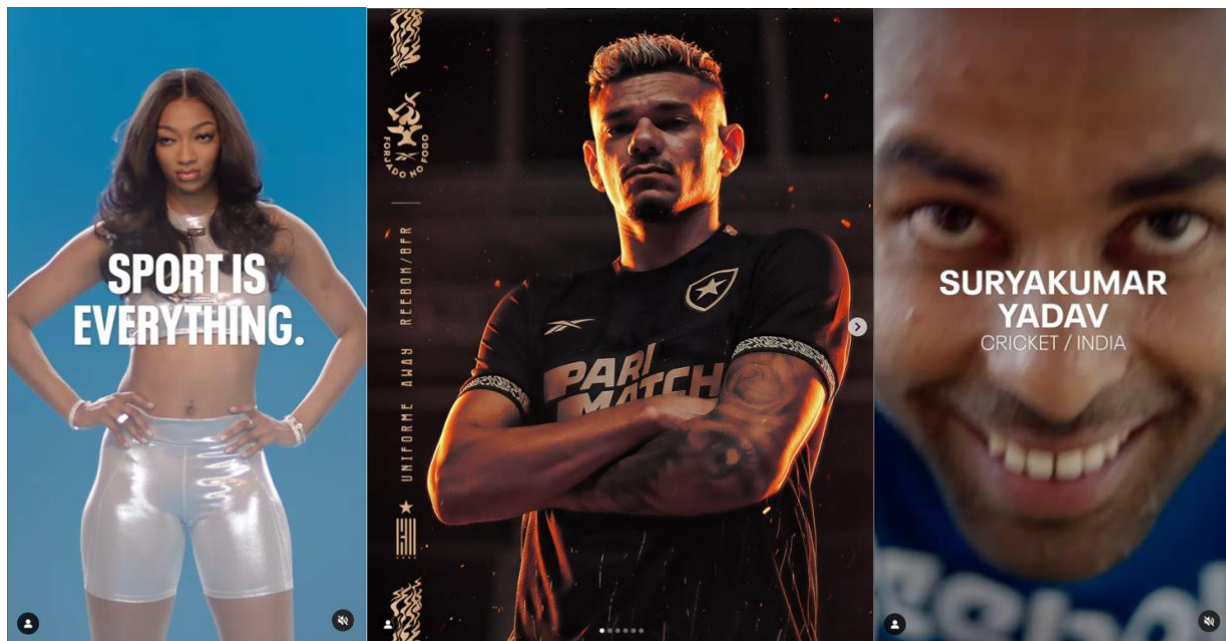
### *Reebok's Digital Presence*

Reebok has a strong digital presence and completes a majority of its sales online directly through their company website. 728million of its estimated 1.3billion in revenue comes from its online shop (eCommerceDB 2024), so it is safe to say that Reebok's digital presence better be strong. Reebok has a company website, Reebok.com, and it is incredibly similar to that of its competitors. A side-by-side comparison of Reebok, New Balance, and Adidas show that these websites have an industry standard, and that none stray far from the mold at all. This is not exactly a flaw though, because if a customer has already made it to Reebok's website, they are likely already sold on their products. More valuable insight can be gained from looking at the rest of the company's digital presence.

The bulk of Reebok's social media presence and interaction comes through their social media channels. They have TikTok, YouTube, and X accounts, and their most interacted with medium is Instagram. Their account has a following of 4 million, but it has an incredibly low engagement rate of about .05%. This means that even though there are 4 million accounts following Reebok, only about an average of 2,000 people interact with each post (in reality most posts only get a few hundred likes, but there some strong outliers pulling this average well up). This

suggests that people are well aware of the brand and are even fans of it, but the company is failing to capitalize on its following to get new people interested and get loyal customers excited about new products and offerings.

Reebok gets its best social media interaction from their athlete sponsored content. Posts with athletes and teams that are sponsored by Reebok consistently perform exceptionally well. A post of Reebok athlete and WNBA star Angel Reese from early 2025 got over 20,000 likes, and an interaction rate of over .6% which about 12 times their average interaction rate. Reebok's online community is largely based on the athletes it sponsors and the sports that they play. Another avenue that Reebok has pursued in the past that has garnered significant traffic is Reebok's "*Sport is Everything*" campaign. Campaigns like this use creative advertisement making to broadcast commercials that have meaning that resonate with the average person. These campaigns were well received by the public and shared many times on social media. Sponsored athletes and creative marketing campaigns should be more of a focus for Reebok's social media department. Reebok has a strong, but lackluster digital presence. Its main issue is that it is not doing well enough to separate itself from its competitors and it is not currently taking advantage of the following that it does have.



Reebok's 3 most interacted with Instagram posts in the past 6 months (Nov. 2024 – April 2025). Each post has the brand and products as secondary to the sponsored athlete or team.

### *Customer Journey Map*



*Customer lifecycle map for Reebok customers*

The customer journey for Reebok looks like that of the customer journey for most other, non-top two sportswear brands. The first step of the customer journey starts with brand awareness; customers become aware of Reebok through social media ads, influencer endorsements, SEO content, or paid search ads (Kotler et al., 2017). Reebok's partnerships with various fitness events also help generate brand visibility.

The next step, and arguably most important step of the customer journey for Reebok, is the consideration phase. During the consideration phase, customers explore Reebok's website, browse their social media, and read customer reviews. They will also do the same for their competitors (like New Balance, Nike, and Adidas) as they actively seek information and evaluate the alternatives based on perceived value (Solomon 2018).

During the purchase stage, customers decide to go with Reebok and will purchase their shoes through the official website, mobile app, or a third-party seller like Amazon.

After the purchase, customers are encouraged to enroll in loyalty programs like Reebok UNLOCKED. They are offered special discounts and access to loyalty program only offers in exchange to be enrolled in email marketing campaigns that offer more targeted advertisement. Lemon and Verhoef proved that this step is incredibly important in building loyalty in digital channels and emphasize that post purchase customer-experience management should be a top priority for companies doing business online.

The final step is loyalty. When customers are satisfied with their purchase, they often time become brand advocates and promoters naturally, which feeds back into the loop by creating more awareness for the brand (Court et al., 2009).

### *The 7P Analysis Applied to Reebok*

<b>7P Analysis: Reebok vs. New Balance</b>		
<b>P</b>	<b>Reebok</b>	<b>New Balance</b>
<b>Product</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on athletic shoes, apparel, and fitness gear.</li> <li>- Strong lifestyle and CrossFit positioning.</li> <li>- Innovative collaborations (e.g., with celebrities, designers).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on athletic shoes, especially <b>running</b> and <b>walking</b>.</li> <li>- Known for wide-fit options and orthopedic comfort.</li> <li>- Premium materials and performance-driven shoes.</li> </ul>
<b>Price</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mid-range pricing with some premium collaborations.</li> <li>- Frequent discounts and outlet presence.</li> <li>- Slightly cheaper than top-tier competitors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mid to high pricing.</li> <li>- Emphasizes "Made in USA/UK" collections at premium prices.</li> <li>- Less discounting than Reebok.</li> </ul>
<b>Place</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Distributed widely: Reebok stores, online, sports retailers (e.g., Foot Locker, Amazon).</li> <li>- Global presence but less exclusive.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Selective distribution: New Balance stores, online, premium retailers.</li> <li>- Stronger focus on brand-owned stores and direct-to-consumer.</li> </ul>
<b>Promotion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaborations with fitness personalities and fashion brands.</li> <li>- More "cool" and fitness lifestyle vibe.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sponsorships with athletes and marathons.</li> <li>- Campaigns focus on authenticity, not flash.</li> </ul>
<b>People</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reebok sales staff are sporty and lifestyle-oriented.</li> <li>- Customer service supports athletic and fitness focus.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New Balance employees often emphasize technical knowledge (e.g., correct fit, running advice).</li> <li>- Stronger community engagement (e.g., running clubs).</li> </ul>
<b>Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Standard e-commerce process.</li> <li>- Partnerships with gyms and fitness studios for customer engagement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emphasizes careful fitting process in stores.</li> <li>- Seamless online ordering experience with fit guides.</li> <li>- Some made-to-order product options.</li> </ul>
<b>Physical Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vibrant store designs, bold colors, sporty displays.</li> <li>- Modern and youthful packaging.</li> <li>- Fitness event sponsorships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stores have clean, simple layouts emphasizing product quality.</li> <li>- Packaging feels premium and understated.</li> <li>- Heavy use of "Made in USA" visual branding.</li> </ul>

### *Reebok's Position in the Current Macroeconomic Environment*

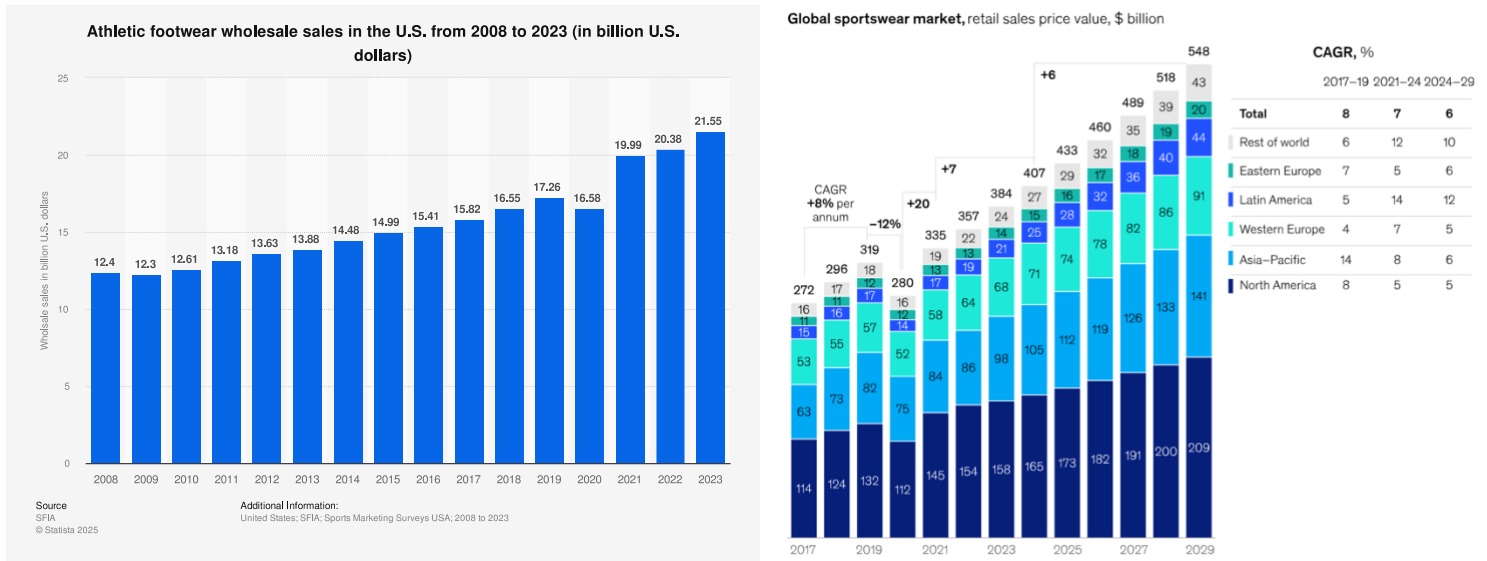
A PESTLE analysis reveals the broader context which a company operates in. In a recent post-pandemic research paper, it was shown that political decisions, economic shifts, social changes, technological advancements, environmental concerns, and legal regulations have reshaped strategies within the apparel industry post-COVID and suggests using the PESTLE analysis as not just a baseline, but as a requirement when navigating the ever-changing landscape of the fashion industry (Baliyan, 2021).

#### *Political*

As a global brand, Reebok is subject to trade agreements and tariffs that can impact supply chains and pricing strategies (Statista, 2023). Reebok must comply with international labor and manufacturing regulations, especially in countries like Vietnam, Indonesia, and China where much of its production occurs.

### Economic

During economic downturns, consumer discretionary spending—like that on athletic wear—declines, directly affecting Reebok's revenue (Euromonitor, 2024). Although this is the case, athletic footwear sales have increased steadily year over year since 2009, excluding the year 2020 as can be seen in the graphics below by Statista (left) and McKinsey (right). Reebok should position itself to capture this increase, regardless of economic prosperity or disparity.



*Athletic footwear sales have shown to be on a steadily increasing trend, despite economic downturns (Statista, 2024) & (McKinsey & Co. 2024)*

### Social

The global shift toward active lifestyles has significantly benefited sportswear companies like Reebok, especially post-COVID-19 (McKinsey & Company, 2021). Gen Z and Millennial consumers increasingly demand sustainable and ethically sourced products, pushing Reebok to launch eco-friendly lines, which has recently been a point of emphasis in Reebok's business.

### Technological

Reebok has invested in digital platforms to compete in a market where e-commerce has become dominant for retail sales. On the physical side, Reebok is lacking behind as developments in performance fabrics and smart materials are shaping the competitive edge in athletic apparel, where competitors like Nike, Adidas, and New Balance have a technological edge (Nike Annual Report, 2023).

### *Environmental*

Reebok launched its “Cotton + Corn” and “[REE]GROW” initiatives to create products with reduced environmental impact (Reebok, 2022). Environmental concerns and climate-related events are disrupting global supply chains, prompting brands like Reebok to build more resilient operations.

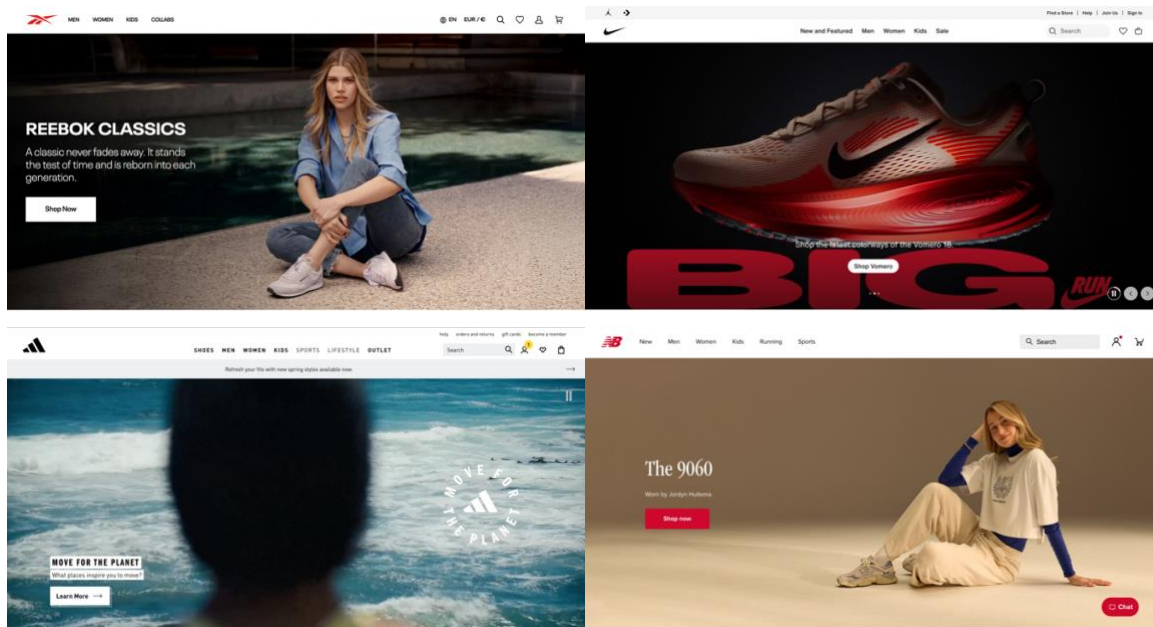
### *Legal*

In the competitive sportswear space, trademark protection is essential to guard against counterfeits and maintain brand equity. In addition, Reebok must comply with global ad standards, especially when marketing health-related benefits or working with influencers (ASA, 2022).

## **Strategic Web Development Proposal**

### *Homepage Usability Analysis*

Reebok’s homepage is standard for the industry. When looking at the homepage of the biggest names in the athletic wear industry like Nike, Adidas, New Balance, and Reebok it becomes apparent that there is an industry standard that is being upheld that companies do not feel comfortable straying from.



*Home pages for (top left to bottom right) Reebok, Nike, Adidas, and New Balance*

With this simple format, navigation is incredibly easy. A large graphic cover most of the screen and shows off the company’s hottest product, and the only option to click around is obvious and clear at the top of the web page and will take you directly to the shopping page that interests the customer. It could be to Reebok’s benefit to try new design’s potentially creating a new industry standard. Perhaps in this evolving digital age a more responsive and more interactive website could drive engagement and change the way people see Reebok.

### ***Reebok's SEO & SEM Analysis***

A PageSpeed Insights audit for Reebok's website reveals that *Reebok.com* fails Google's Core Web Vitals assessment, mainly due to a borderline Largest Contentful Paint (2.5s) and First Contentful Paint (2.1s). Though this borderline score of 2.5 second may sound trivially important, it has been proven time and time again that a loading time under 2 seconds is critical to retention. Once the two second loading time window has passed, bounce rates increase at a high multiple (WebFX 2023). This is especially true for mobile users, 53% of mobile users leave if load time is greater than 3 second, and with Reebok doing most of their business online they have to ensure that they are not losing customers due to long load times (Google/SOASTA 2017). Although server response time and layout stability are excellent, Reebok could enhance its SEO by optimizing image sizes, implementing lazy loading, and deferring non-critical JavaScript. Improving these areas would provide a faster, smoother user experience and potentially improve search engine rankings.

A basic Search Engine Marketing analysis reveals that Reebok's paid search visibility is inconsistent across key fitness-related search terms. For this search engine analysis, key words that would likely be the search for someone looking to buy a new pair of fitness shoes without any brand loyalty were used. This SEM reflects a new customer not looking for a particular brand. For the highly competitive phrase "best running shoes", no Reebok-sponsored results appeared, whereas New Balance had 21 results prominently featured. When searching for "training shoes", Reebok performed slightly better, with three results, including one within the top three ad placements. However, for the important niche keyword "best CrossFit shoes", Reebok did not appear in the sponsored shopping ads, despite being mentioned in several organic blog posts. These findings suggest that Reebok's current paid search strategy is missing opportunities to capture high-intent traffic in critical product categories. People are talking about Reebok, people are mentioning Reebok in their blog posts about CrossFit training, but when you search CrossFit shoes Reebok is not popping up as an easily accessible option from the search engine.

To remedy this issue, Reebok should expand its keyword targeting to include broader high-conversion terms such as "best running shoes" and "best CrossFit shoes," ensuring visibility among high-intent audiences. Reebok should work to tie its name to CrossFit, this is a huge niche that if capitalized on, could increase sales by multiples. Incorporating long-tail keywords into Reebok's SEM strategy would allow the brand to capture niche market segments at lower cost-per-click rates and enhancing ad copy to emphasize Reebok's brand authority and product strengths, such as partnerships with CrossFit and durability credentials, could further boost click-through rates.

### ***Paid, Owned, Earned, and Social Media***

Reebok is currently utilizing paid, owned, earned, and social media resources. Paid media, like television advertisements and search engine sponsored content is likely Reebok's largest spend, but as mentioned previously in the SEM analysis it is not being used to its full potential. Reebok owns plenty of media which touts the benefit of complete control over the shared content, but this type of media lacks the dynamic interaction found on social platforms. Owned media is essential for consistent messaging, but it does not engage customers in real-time



conversations about the brand and its products (Faradila, 2024). Additionally, earned media, which comes in the form of customer reviews, can help increase brand credibility, but it is often unreliable and inconsistent (Harlan 2022). Reebok should continue to make good products and allow earned media to grow naturally.

Social media is Reebok's best avenue for advertisement. Previously, we mentioned that Reebok's athlete sponsored content was its biggest driver for engagement, and brand loyalty. Research proves that this phenomenon is not unique to Reebok's case, and that companies often benefit from increased engagement, brand loyalty, and more purchase intentions when people with perceived authenticity and expertise like athletes and celebrities endorse a product (Abdinagoro, 2024). This avenue of athlete sponsorships is as symbiotic relationship. Athletes are able to promote their personal brands through affiliations with brands and through appearances on advertisements (Riot, 2022). Reebok should aim to grow their paid and social media channels, specifically focusing on partnerships and ad campaigns centered around brand sponsored athletes.

## **Identification of Managerial Objectives**

### ***Reebok's Current Online Community***

Reebok maintains a loyal fitness related customer base and has captured a large part of the niche CrossFit community; however, engagement is much lower than its competitors like Nike, Adidas, and New Balance. Reebok has many mentions in active fitness communities and blogs, but there are very few official, Reebok-led forms or groups. Reebok's next step in building the online community is to start to lead the conversation. There are many ways Reebok can do this, but for starters they should increase their physical presence in events related to their niche. CrossFit events sponsored by Reebok would be a great start, and creating online forums, led by Reebok, that are related to CrossFit would be a great way to create a community of loyal customers that are interacting with one another. Building brand communities either online or in-app is crucial, because community belonging increases loyalty and advocacy for the brand (Muniz, 2001). Reebok can use social network analysis to identify key influencers and brand advocates within the fitness and CrossFit communities as a good place to start.

### ***Web Analytic KPI's***

KPI's are a great way for Reebok to continually track its performance by analyzing customer's interactions with the brand. Below are a few KPI's that Reebok should track in order to measure their performance.

#### ***Bounce rate***

Bounce rate is measured as the number of single-page visits divided by the number of total visits. A high bounce rate means that people are entering Reebok.com, but not visiting any other pages which means that the customer journey makes it to the consideration phase but is stopped just before a purchase. A high bounce rate can indicate issues with site content relevance or poor user experience, which would suggest that Reebok's homepage is inadequate (Chaffey 2012). If Reebok discovers it has a high bounce rate, then it should attempt to break away from

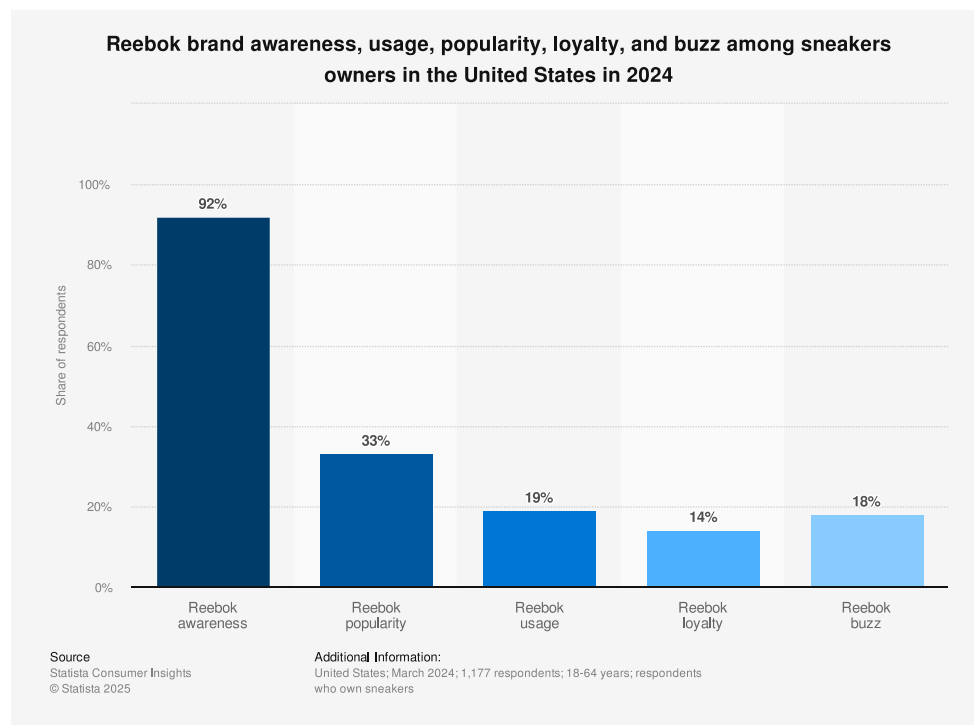
the industry standard homepage, and experiment with different interfaces and see which one produces the lowest bounce rate score.

### *Customer Lifetime Value*

Customer lifetime value can be measured as the sum of all purchases of a single customer. This metric is incredibly important, because not only does it allow Reebok to find out who its most valuable customers are, it allows them to track customer loyalty at large. Research shows that the customer experience is cumulative, and that a good customer experience throughout the entirety of the customer cycle is incredibly important in building a customer base with a high customer lifetime value (Lemon, 2016). In order to boost this KPI, Reebok needs to focus on enhancing customer satisfaction throughout the customer journey.

### *First Time Purchases*

First time purchases can be measured as any time a new customer makes their first purchase. This KPI is incredibly important because it can help Reebok identify which customers are in the transitionary phase between purchase and loyalty. If Reebok can consistently provide great service, discounts, and promotions to customers in this group, they will create a loyal customer base that will continue to purchase from the brand and advocate for them, which feeds back into the first step of the customer journey. The figure below shows that customers are well aware of Reebok but getting them to this first purchase and keeping customers loyal after this purchase is critical for Reebok to grow their market share.



*Statista report showing different metrics for Reebok which relate to the customer lifecycle and mentioned KPI's*

## Conclusion

Reebok is a strong, independent brand battling giants in the athletic apparel industry. Reebok is uniquely positioned, well known respected brand, but has an uphill battle if it wishes to overcome and replace industry titans. To start capturing a larger percentage of sales, Reebok is going to have think outside of the box. Instead of following industry standard, Reebok is going to have to break the standards and start new ones. This starts with the homepage design, which should go through test runs as it is tweaked. New designs should be tested using the KPI bounce rate to see which design fosters the most clickthrough's. Additionally, Reebok should increase their Paid and Social media presence, especially in the form of athlete sponsorship and athlete centered ad campaigns. This in turn will help create a more active and excited online community, which will give loyal customers a place to both interact and advocate on behalf of the brand.

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