

Crocs n' Socs: The New Crocs

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Consumer Behavior

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Product

Our product is the Crocs n' Socs. This product includes a new style of Crocs sandals along with a pair of Crocs branded ankle socks. These sandals are similar in style to the classic Birkenstock sandals, however they are modeled in distinct Crocs fashion. These sandals will function as stylish, comfortable shoes that are great for everyday wear. They will maintain the Iconic Crocs Comfort promised with every Crocs shoe, and will be made with the signature Croslite foam cushioning to offer both comfort and support. In addition to being more stylish and trendier than other Crocs shoes, these sandals will still maintain the most desirable Crocs properties that initially attracted customers to the brand years ago. The sandals will be light (weigh only a couple of ounces like the classic clog), water resistant, buoyant, breathable, easy to clean, quick to dry, affordable, and customizable. Customers will be able to customize their shoes in color, pattern, and with Jibbitz charms.

This product will fall under the footwear category, in which Crocs is already a prominent brand. Crocs n' Socs will be sold under the Crocs name. This combination of products allows for maximum comfort and trendiness, as socks and sandals are a very popular footwear trend amongst Generation Z consumers. After the initial launch, our shoe design will also be sold separately from socks, however we will still recommend purchasing the products together on Crocs.com.

Crocs has recently rebranded, and introduced a new logo which will be clearly seen on our shoes. This will allow for increased brand awareness and can serve as a way for consumers to showcase their trendy status. The straps of the shoes will have small holes that add breathability, but can also serve as a place for customization. Jibbitz can be added to the shoes by

placing them in these holes. By designing these shoes around the idea of customization, we will be bringing Crocs motto, “Come as you are”, to life. Our product can be customized in infinite ways by allowing customers to choose from a vast range of shoe colors, shoe patterns, Jibbitz charms, and sock designs.

Schema

We expect that the schema for this product will build off of consumers schema for the original Crocs rubber clogs. Consumers will associate this new product with comfort and affordability, as those were two of the main selling points for original Crocs shoes. They will also likely think of water resistance, foam, and color when thinking of our product. Crocs were originally created as boating shoes and were loved by many for their waterproof foam material, so consumers will likely remember this. Additionally, Crocs have always been offered in a wide range of colors, which consumers have learned to associate with the Crocs brand.

There are also some new associations adding to the consumer schema of our product. These include TikTok, celebrities, trendiness, customization, personalization, creativity and nostalgia. Crocs lost their popularity for a long period of time. Consumers once swore by their comfort and affordability, but as more fashionable and aesthetically pleasing shoes that were comfortable were introduced to the market, Crocs were seen as ugly and irrelevant. Recently Crocs have become trendy, following a collaboration with Post Malone, a viral picture of Ariana Grande wearing the white signature clogs, and frequent reference to the Crocs brand on the extremely popular social media platform, TikTok. Younger generations are already beginning to associate the Croc brand with culturally relevancy, and we believe that our product will solidify this association. Our design is something we are confident that young consumers will love

Additionally, through the sale of newly designed Jibbitz and use of our custom design lab, Crocs will bring personalization to a new level. Many consumers in our target demographic likely wore the original clog by Crocs when they were younger. Because of this, we believe our product will also bring a sense of nostalgia to consumers.

Consumer Needs

Crocs n' Socs are filling a wide variety of consumer needs. Crocs n' Socs is positioned to be a very affordable product while still remaining trendy. This is extremely important as are target market largely consists of a younger generation. This age group is very focused on staying up to date on trends, however they may not have the financial means to purchase products priced at a high premium. The product we are offering is also extremely customizable, which has been a major consumer trend recently. By providing a large variety of colors, patterns, and additional Jibbitz for purchase, Crocs n' Socs will allow customers to get creative and create their perfect pair. Our instore and online design labs will also allow customers to personalize their shoes even further. Typically, personalization comes at a high price tag in the marketplace. Crocs n' Socs will allow for consumers to indulge in the customization process in an affordable way.

Brand Personality Traits & Associations

Crocs is currently associated with the "excitement" category of the brand personality, attributing to traits like trendy, odd/quirky, carefree, and youthful. Since its founding in the early 2000s, the Crocs' personality could have been described as popular, youthful, comfortable, and flexible. But given its fast popularity phase, it became simply a nostalgic 2000's "relic". However, it is no doubt coming back as another wave of popularity on social media. If our product was to be advertised on social media, it may first want to appeal to young social media

influencers who love this “quirky” brand personality, or other influencers who are not afraid to try something out of the current norm, hence the brand’s “excitement” personality type. Once the word spreads on a trend like this, Crocs has the potential appeal to young social media-savvy users (i.e. millennials, Gen Y, and Gen Z), who are also quick to identify and follow trends.

Main Competitors

Crocs current main competitors are other shoe brands that emphasize comfort, including but not limited to, Skechers, Converse, Nike, and Dr. Martens. For brands like Nike and Skechers, one will easily notice the overlapping of their products (and target market), such as their strap sandals that are comparatively better in air circulation than Crocs’ famous Clog shoes. While Crocs has created other shoes that are more sandal-like, they have not reached the market as well as Nike, Adidas, and Skechers did with their respective target markets. With this new Crocs n’ Socs model, however, we believe that the product’s reminiscent 2000’s look coupled with its adherence to the currently “trendy” Birkenstocks sandals could attract younger consumers to try out a new wave of these sandals, which is considerably different from Clogs, but not so radical that it would repel our current loyal consumers.

Prototype and Positioning

The introduction of the new Croc will be based off the line of Birkenstocks EVA Arizona crafted from plastic and marketed as a convenient and cost-efficient alternative to their normal line. The Birkenstock website describes the Arizona as “the quintessential Birkenstock shoe. Defining ultimate laid-back cool for decades, the open back two-strap Birkenstock Arizona has become the gender and age-neutral sandal sought out time and again.” Crocs have been long disassociated with modern-day sandal brands as the common image of childish footwear as

arisen with the Croc name. Birkenstock, on the other hand, has been deemed an elevated, yet relaxed footwear brand that offers high quality prices without breaking the bank.

Before diving into the positioning strategy, understanding the fundamentals of the Birkenstock brand is imperative to our new way for Crocs. The brand has existed for 245 years, and the structure of the sandals has not altered once. The famous “footbed” has never been edited or redone, and any alteration to that design would be seen as extremely sacrilegious.

Birkenstock’s first fashion relevance occurred in the 1960s’, with the rise of hippies and an outdoor-living lifestyle (Chen). The second revival came in the 1990s as Generation X adopted the chunky and “ugly” shoes (Chen). The Birkenstock brand prides itself on being a selective brand when it comes to collaborations, which can be a costly move at times. Most recently, the brand turned down a collaboration with fashion company Supreme, with the co-chief executive Oliver Reichert saying “We are not a base for stickers. You need to bring something to the table. If you just print something on something else, it’s not a form of art.” Birkenstock is a brand that does not stray from what works, playing it safe when it comes to innovation.

Many might wonder how a company (Crocs), which is more than two decades younger, could position itself against Birkenstocks. For the new Crocs, the strategy against the prototype is a competitive one. We know that this shoe is not a pioneer in the category, but it does offer some significant differences from the prototype. With this competitive strategy we will be emphasizing on certain associations, while distinguishing ourselves with various new features. The connection that we want to remain intact is the idea of “ugly fashion.” Grace Cook for the *Business of Fashion* writes “the uglier the item, the higher the social-media status.” We want to maintain this connection of looking modern and “with the times” without having to try so much. Birkenstocks have been well known, as stated above, for the ugly but desirable aesthetic.

Comfort and convenience are two of the biggest buzz-words in fashion today – and Crocs are no stranger to this association. Maintaining that image is crucial to the introduction of the new Crocs. Another association we need to align ourselves with Birkenstock is the non-gendered shoe. Christopher Kane, a fashion designer who has collaborated with Crocs in 2017, sums this up perfectly stating, “There is no getting around it, Crocs are ugly. It’s a bonus that they are so comfortable, that’s the whole point, that’s their charm. I like that they’re not designed to be feminine or flattering. My sister wears them in her garden.” However, there are many points we need to differentiate ourselves from Birkenstocks and their footwear. The first, and to many the most important, is the value. The classic clog, minus designer collaborations, do not retail for any more than \$40. While this may not be the lowest price possible, the Crocs offer a shoe that a customer will only need to buy once. These clogs are so durable, easy to clean, and water-proof, that will truly normal wear, no customer will ever need to buy another – unless of course they want to dabble in new colors.

Additionally, we will strive to differentiate ourselves by being much more open to designer collaborations. It is clear that Birkenstock does not want to associated with changing consumer behavior, and the rise of social media in the past decade has not offered much marketable value to them. But Crocs is a much newer brand in comparison, and we will not shy away from utilizing social media and the trend of “ugly fashion.” Designer collaborations have been used with the classic Crocs clog. Most notably might be the crossover with Balenciaga. The fashion mogul designed a 4-inch platform clog, covered in designer Jibbitz, and adorned with both the Balenciaga and Crocs logo. As these shoes graced the runway, they become very prevalent on social media as many shared photos of the “ridiculous” shoe and many celebrities sought them out. Cook writes about this launch stating, “So newsworthy was the shoe that BBC

News in the UK even covered it. In today's social media-driven world, Balenciaga putting a Crocs clog on its runway is a far more effective marketing tool than any advertising campaign. And yet, the style has been picked up by MatchesFashion.com — the first time the luxury e-tailer has ever stocked Crocs." Our new Crocs will not be a stranger to designer collaborations, as we want consumer to continuously be shocked and intrigued by our releases. To sum this entire position strategy up, Michelle Poole, the senior vice president of product and marketing, writes, "We haven't lost sight of who we are though, a brand that delivers comfort and good value, and it will never be our intention to move away from our core customer — the mom, the beach-goer, the gardener."

Target Market

Crocs, like most footwear companies, strive to meet the consumers need to protect their feet from the outdoor conditions, such as water, dirt, rocks, etc. This need is, of course, something that will not be abandoned, but our target market must be expanded upon. The classic Crocs clog uses a very undifferentiated marketing strategy, as the shoe is close-toed (for colder, and wetter environments) but includes breathable holes (for warmer climates). Our marketing strategy will be following a very similar pattern – the shoe is an open-toed sandal for warmer climates, but we will be marketing the ankle socks as well, which addresses the colder climates. The target market will be the working class through upper-middle class. We do not want to isolate the lower class, which has been a consistent consumer of the classic and well-priced clog, with the adoption of a trendier and media driven marketing strategy, but we want teens to young-adults situated in the in the middle to upper-middle class to feel that they are purchasing a social-status product. The new Crocs needs to be an "Instagrammable," yet usable shoe, that spreads the image of the new Crocs brand and our mission as a rising footwear fashion company.

Packaging and Logo

The current packaging of Crocs shoes is a bright green common shoe box and lacks any sort of personalization. With our personalized approach in our product, we plan to improve our packaging as well. One consideration is adding a branded gym sack imprinted with a small Crocs logo. Because the shoes themselves are colorful, we plan to provide strictly white or black gym sacks to balance out the color scheme.

Designer Stephen Kelleher reimagined the Crocs logo that gained a great positive feedback from the public. His design replaces the detailed cartoon of a crocodile-in-a-circle design with a sleeker and more minimalistic one: a “simple vector shape, representative of a crocodile’s head, which features the signature holes found in Crocs’ classic clog” (*Creative Bloq*). We decided to stick with this logo, as it reinforces that image of Crocs being back on trend again.

Promotion

In terms of promoting and advertising Crocs n’ Socs, Crocs will capitalize off of the resurgence in trendiness of Crocs and their current pop culture moment. Crocs are especially popular among young teens and tweens so this is the demographic that the promotion and advertising will focus on. Our product is positioned as a more stylish version of the standard Croc but still under the Croc name because, as previously mentioned, the Croc name is very recognizable and in vogue right now. Because young teens and tweens are the target market the main form of promotion that Crocs n’ Socs will use is celebrity and influencer endorsement.

In terms of celebrity promotion, the first person who will promote Crocs n’ Socs is Ariana Grande. In September 2019 Ariana Grande posted an Instagram of herself wearing white Crocs with white ankle socks and, as footwearnews.com put it, “twitter went crazy” (Chochrek).

Her outfit was very stylish and made the Crocs look trendy and cute. This inspired many of Ariana's followers to go out and buy their own pair of white Crocs. After her Instagram post went viral the sale of Crocs, white Crocs specifically, skyrocketed (Chochrek). For this new product, Crocs n' Socs, Ariana's celebrity status will be used again to promote this even trendier pair of Crocs. She will use her social media to connect to her millions of followers to showcase this new shoe design and exemplify how to style them to her followers. Other popular celebrities among teens and tweens will also be recruited to promote Crocs n' Socs. This includes people like Kendall and Kylie Jenner, Shawn Mendes, and Post Malone. They would all use their strong social media presences and large fan bases to reach the target market. Other influencers like TikTok stars and popular YouTubers would be paid to promote Crocs n' Socs on their platforms also.

Another avenue for promotion comes from the additional charms that one can buy to adorn their Crocs called "Jibbitz." These are small, button-like, charms that fit into the holes of Crocs and can be bought in many different designs. In order to make Crocs n' Socs relevant and trendy there will be collaborations with celebrities, recognizable brands, and popular artists who will design their own Jibbitz. This includes designs like Kimojis (Kim Kardashian's line of custom emoji), brand logos like Gucci, and famous artwork from artists like Takashi Murakami.

Crocs will also come out with a small line of ankle socks to go with the new design of the shoes. Wearing ankle socks and sandals is a very popular trend among teens so by selling socks along with the shoes it will help establish these shoes as trendy and with the times.

Pricing

In terms of pricing the Crocs n' Socs there will be different price levels depending on the type of product offered. Our product will be priced below Birkenstocks due to the lower quality

materials used and to keep it competitive, yet the product will still have an elevated price range to signal its value and trendiness. Birkenstocks range from \$29.95 for the one strap, plastic shoe, to \$350.00 for the leather two strap sandal. The average, most popular Birkenstocks cost between \$99.00 and \$135.00. The current Crocs on the market range from \$24.99 for their flip flops to \$109.99 for their snow boots. Crocs' standard and most popular shoe costs about \$39.99. Based off of this information the standard two strap style Crocs will be priced at \$45.99, a price that is much lower than the comparable \$99.00 Birkenstocks but higher than the average Croc because they are a lot more stylish and trendier. There will also be an option to customize the Crocs n' Socs and this will come with an elevated price range. Depending on which customizations the customer chooses to make the Crocs will vary in price. The lowest price for the customizable Crocs will be \$50.99.

The new, trendier Jibbitz that Crocs designs in house will be priced at the same price that they are already offered, \$3.99. However, the Jibbitz collaborations will be priced at a premium because they will be more popular and expensive to make as the celebrities and various partners will need to be paid a portion of their Jibbitz design sales. With this in mind the Jibbitz collaborations will be priced at \$4.99.

Product Distribution

There will be a wide release of the Crocs n' Socs in the Croc stores around the United States and they will also be sold online. Due to current trends where consumers prefer shopping online versus in brick and mortar stores and the fact that Crocs is closing a lot of their stores, it is expected that most of the sales will be made on the Croc website. They will also be sold in larger shoe retailers like Macy's, Kohl's, Walmart, and Famous Footwear later on in the plan. We do not want to bring this model to wholesalers just yet, as we would like to create a sense of

“exclusivity” when purchasing the shoes. In terms of the customizable shoes they will be offered at first online only but in the few most popular Crocs brick and mortar stores there will be updates made to create a “design lab” of sorts where consumers can come in and design their own Crocs with the help of in store sales associates/ “design assistants.”

Conclusion

The reimagination of Crocs is a feat that will take careful consideration and planning. Utilizing shifting consumer behaviors and the rise and prominence of “ugly fashion”, we have been able to design a solid roadmap for the launch of Crocs n’ Socs. The customization of the footwear, with the inclusion of Jibbitz and a large color range, allows the consumer to feel in control of their purchase, while also maintaining their own sense of style. The new footwear will be able to ride off of the prominence of Crocs as nostalgic, durable, and comfort-bringing shoes, but launch off with designer collaborations, new logos, packaging, and social-status connections. We have designed these shoes to not break the bank for the consumer, and still maintain the durability of the known clog. With this new product, we hope to not only continue Crocs reign over “ugly fashion”, but become the new leader in more sleek, modern, and comfortable footwear.

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