



2009 ZAPPOS LIFE CASUAL AND ACTIVE COVERS

King Fish Media Case Study ZAPPOS.COM

Online retailer uses storytelling through custom “magalogs” to bring the Zappos culture and lifestyle to print.

Target

Online buyers of active apparel and footwear – skewing towards females between the ages of 25-45.

Objective

Zappos.com, the wildly successful online apparel and footwear retailer whose annual sales exceed \$1 billion, was looking to break away from the traditional apparel and footwear catalog layouts. Its goal was to launch a visually engaging, lifestyle format hybrid that sells the Zappos culture and vision for active living as much as the products themselves.

Zappos wanted a catalog that would help its target buyers – skewed toward women between the ages of 25 and 45 – view products in real-world environments featuring credible interactions between young adults.

Its business objectives were twofold: generate online sales from new customers (and convert them to long-term, repeat customers) while increasing sales to current and lapsed customers (defined as those with no purchases for more than 12 months).

THE GOAL was to launch a visually engaging, lifestyle format hybrid that sells the Zappos culture and vision for active living as much as the products themselves.



ZAPPOS CASUAL, 2009



USING STORYTELLING TO ENGAGE CUSTOMERS

WE WANTED to create something that the recipient could identify with and aspire to, rather receive the typical pile of catalogs.

—CAM BROWN, PRESIDENT, KING FISH MEDIA

Finally, Zappos wanted to provide a new advertising environment for leading footwear and apparel brands who sell their products through Zappos.com.

Execution

Zappos partnered with King Fish Media to create a series of “magalogs,” using storytelling to bring the Zappos lifestyle to print. The magalog would be based on a clear, tightly focused “story,” or theme, targeted to a specific demographic, featuring products that best fit the theme.

The first magalog was called **Casual Lifestyle**, which depicts the story behind the products and the people using them by using magazine-style techniques — including bold photography and typographical treatment — to reinforce the energy conveyed by the community that purchases from Zappos.com. The magalog’s theme centers on a beach boardwalk scene, with a group of friends interacting within a vibrant, color-rich environment.

“We wanted to create something that the recipient could identify with and aspire to, rather than simply join the pile of typical catalogs received in a given month,” says Cam Brown, President, King Fish Media.

A second magalog, **Active Lifestyle**, was strategically photographed in locations that appeal to outdoor and fitness enthusiasts: hiking trails in the redwood forest, indoor gyms and track-and-field facilities. To simply arrange products in the studio undermines the real story of buyers who use products and get dirty in the process. We’re talking about real life, real people, which is essential to the Zappos culture.

To introduce the Zappos culture to new shoppers, every issue opens with a letter from Zappos.com CEO Tony Hsieh; the rest of the magalog is peppered with employee quotes endorsing the company’s culture.



NOT YOUR TRADITIONAL PRODUCT SHOTS.



UNIQUE DESIGN TO HIGHLIGHT PRODUCTS.

In addition to the print components, King Fish developed digital editions of both magalogs. The digital version incorporates the same creative as the print version, but in an interactive format that allows customers to click through and buy directly from the Zappos store. The online versions also enable Zappos to capture valuable tracking information related to brand performance. In early 2009, when Zappos sent outbound emails to current customers with a link to the digital editions, the site experienced its best single day of online sales.

THE DIGITAL version incorporates the same creative as the print version, but in an interactive format that allows customers to click through and buy directly from Zappos store.

Results

The main method of measurement was a match-back of the magalog mailing list against a list of all people who bought from the Zappos.com site for a period of six weeks after the release of the Active and Casual magalogs. This process enabled Zappos to know which individuals who received the magalog at home had gone online and purchased a product from Zappos.com after the mailing. The results showed that the magalog response rate was significantly higher than industry direct mail benchmarks. Additionally, magalog customers had an average higher cart size than typical customers.

In addition to customer sales, the magalogs generated significant ad revenue from major brands that purchased space within the magalogs, including New Balance, Columbia, Keen, Oakley, Reebok, Nike, The North Face, Dooley & Bourke, Clarks, Timberland, Rockport and UGG.

Zappos considered the magalog a success on all counts: ad revenue, new customer acquisition, and reactivation of existing customers who had not purchased from Zappos in years. ●



ZAPPOS ACTIVE, 2009

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