



2007 Gold Effie Winner

“Jordan BE Lifestyle Campaign”

Category: **African American**
Agency: **Wieden+Kennedy New York**
Client: **Jordan Brand**

Strategic Challenge

During the 1990's, Michael and his Jordan Brand were on top of the marketing world. It seemed everyone wanted to “Be Like Mike.” MJ was the star of stars, and his Air Jordan line became a global giant in the athletic sneaker and apparel category, which would later be called the urban apparel industry. That was then. This is now. And an awful lot has changed in the past 10 years.

The most important change to the category has been the global rise of rap music and Hip Hop culture, an economic juggernaut whose power can best be felt in the \$2+ billion global urban lifestyle apparel industry. (Source: Marshal Cohen, analyst at NPD Group 2005) Headlining this movement are such major multi-media entertainment and fashion players as Sean “P. Diddy” Combs with his Sean John Clothing line and Sean “Jay-Z” Carter with his Rocawear Clothing line. Together, they have supplanted Michael Jordan as the biggest major market movers among the significant 12-24 year-old urban-influenced consumer segment.

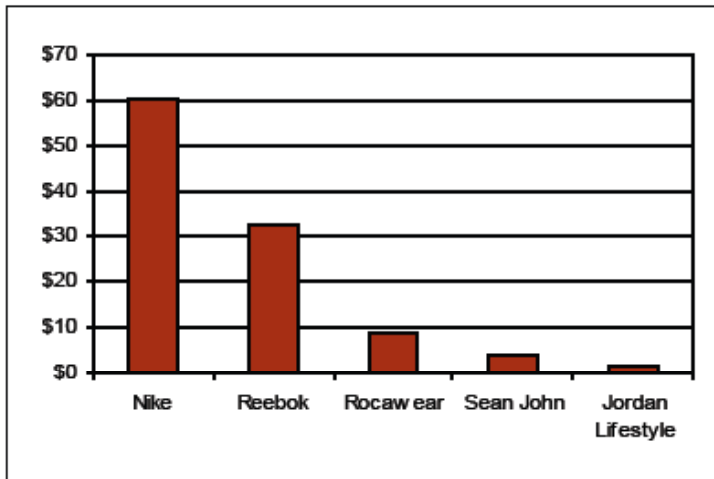
Jordan's competitors continually garner significant unpaid promotion and publicity for their respective apparel lines on an almost daily basis through millions of CD sales, music videos, television interviews, websites, endorsement contracts, events, concerts, and appearances on entertainment awards shows. In addition to this non-traditional gratis media exposure, they have also historically outspent the Jordan Brand. (See chart below, outlining Jordan Brand's top 4 competitors' ad spends in the urban apparel space.)

The Jordan Brand faced two major strategic challenges when it decided to launch its inaugural Jordan Lifestyle Collection of apparel during the highly competitive Back-to-School season in the fall of 2005. First, it had to generate buzz in the category and attract the coveted 12-24 year-old urban-influenced consumer in addition to the fashion trade community with one of the smallest media

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budgets in the category, at under \$1MM. It was critical that each media and production dollar was used to trigger a conversation among the brand's core audience with no waste. Second, Jordan Brand had to differentiate itself from a super-saturated urban apparel landscape (\$600MM in spending in 2005; Source: Nielsen Ad*Views) within just short two months from August – September 2005, the pivotal Back-to-School shopping period.



Spending against apparel only from November 2004 - October 2005.

*All spending in millions.

Source: Nielsen Ad*Views

Campaign Objectives:

1. Create a clear and authentic reason for being for the Jordan Lifestyle Apparel Collection, establishing a more contemporary and culturally relevant spin on Michael Jordan's life and legacy.
2. Make a major statement within the urban lifestyle apparel category, generating additional media impressions and talk value among core consumers and the fashion/trade industry.
3. Generate Jordan Brand Collection apparel sell-through rates of at least 30%, credibly establishing the brand as a lifestyle apparel option for this consumer, eventually making its way from retail window into his closet.

The Big Idea

In order to assure success within the category, the Jordan Brand had to stay true to its heritage as an athletic performance brand founded firmly on Michael Jordan's life and legacy. It also had to create compelling communications that credibly established the brand within the highly competitive urban apparel space. In an effort to make Michael (a 40-something retired athlete) more accessible to our core, we decided to highlight elements of young Michael's roots in his birthplace of Brooklyn, New York. This was a way to credibly connect Michael to an iconic city within Hip Hop culture and home to rap icons Jay-Z and the late Notorious B.I.G., two of the core's all-time favorite rappers*. Brooklyn became the setting for the campaign, which immediately made MJ's life more relatable to the core audience's own inner-city lifestyle and experience. The working line for the campaign became "The Life. The Legacy. The Collection." (*Source: Agency Research 2005)

We wanted to continue to credibly align the Jordan Brand with Hip Hop culture without losing the brand's athletic performance heritage. And what more influential and efficient media channel is there to speak to this audience than the music video? When shopping for apparel, rap music videos are the

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most influential media vehicle among this audience. Based on agency research, music videos are where the majority of our consumers “window shop” for new clothes and sneakers that rappers and celebrities regularly feature on BET and MTV. (Source: Agency Research 2005; supported by client-led research executed by Sterling Research Group in June of 2004.)

Armed with the above insight, we sought out Chicago-born Geffen Records rapper, former Chicago Bulls ball-boy, and well-known Michael Jordan fan Common. The Jordan Brand licensed his title track “BE” off his album of the same name as the campaign’s thematic musical track. By working with Common, the Jordan Brand gained immense authenticity within the category and was able to leverage the authentic Chicago Bulls basketball connection. We then negotiated the rights to produce a music video for “BE” as a collaborative effort between the Jordan Brand and Geffen Records. [The music video “BE” was also a nice way to continue the dialogue the brand started in Spring 2005 with the Air Jordan XX sneaker effort that ran with the tagline of “Will You BE The One?”]

Bringing the Idea to Life

Jordan Brand created a music video with Common to launch its Lifestyle Collection of apparel featuring three Team Jordan athletes – Terrell Owens, Carmelo Anthony, and Quentin Richardson.

The music video, shot by acclaimed music video director Paul Hunter, recounts the journey of these Team Jordan athletes to Michael’s childhood brownstone home in Brooklyn on Bedford and Nostrand Avenues, where the three featured athletes “Walk[ed] like warriors, [they] were never told to run. Explored the world [of Michael Jordan] to return to where [their collective] soul begun,” which is a powerful verse from Common’s song “BE.” These powerful lyrics were featured in supporting print, which is a photo-documentary of the athletes’ historic journey to Michael’s birthplace, creating synergy between elements in the campaign. Multi-media synergy was the key to creating a sense of bigness for the campaign.

In the absence of any real media spending, broadcast relationships were leveraged to gain additional exposure for the Jordan/Common “BE” video on BET and numerous online video content sites. Distribution of the music video created immediate, organic consumer and trade buzz surrounding Common, his title track and the Jordan Brand’s Lifestyle Collection of apparel.

The multi-media plan also sparked conversation within the fashion trade industry. As part of the post launch campaign, the “BE” music video was also distributed to over 10,000 music, fashion, and entertainment industry tastemakers via a mixtape CD/DVD, produced by Cornerstone Promotions. In addition, a large impact unit billboard featuring the three Team Jordan athletes was purchased in Las Vegas outside of the MAGIC Apparel Tradeshow in Las Vegas, Nevada, in August 2005, to communicate Jordan Brand’s arrival in the urban apparel market.

Results

1. Create a clear and authentic reason and for being for the Jordan Lifestyle Apparel Collection, establishing a more contemporary spin on Michael Jordan’s life and legacy.

Although Michael Jordan is over 40 years of age and has children older than the core target, we found a way to make his iconic life story more contemporary and relevant to this younger audience. The 2 min 30 sec long Jordan BE Lifestyle music video premiered on BET’s “106th & Park,” the country’s #1 music video countdown program (Source: Nielsen Ratings, 2005), on August 26th, 2005 and was quickly voted into the show’s normal rotation by the fans through an

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unsolicited online voting process. It ended its run after thirteen (13) straight weeks in the show's top 10 video rotation.

2. Make a major statement within the *urban* apparel category, generating additional media impressions and talk value among core consumers and the fashion/trade industry.

The campaign generated over 57.5MM impressions*, a level typically earned with a national TV buy. In this key Back-to-School time period, Jordan Brand, spending the lowest amount in the category at less than \$1MM, earned a level of impressions comparable to the big spenders in the category – Nike: \$24.1 MM, Reebok/RbK: \$9.9MM, Rocawear: \$3.9MM, Sean John: \$2.0MM (Source: Nielsen Ad*Views).

Most importantly, the campaign also received over \$2.59MM* in bonus media space, resulting in over an additional 43.6MM impressions. Due to the overwhelming success and talk value caused by the Jordan Lifestyle launch, the video and its Michael Jordan story were picked up by several other networks such as ESPN2's "Quite Frankly with Stephen A. Smith," and ABC's "The Jimmy Kimmel Show" among others. (*Source: Agency media estimates, based on Nielsen Ad*Views)

3. Generate Jordan Brand Collection apparel sell-through rates of at least 30%, credibly establishing itself as a lifestyle apparel option for this consumer, eventually making its way from retail window into his closet.

As a result, apparel outsold sneakers for the first time in the Jordan Brand's history. Jordan Lifestyle apparel flew through retailers at a sell-through rate of 70%, outpacing even the most optimistic industry estimates. (Source: Fran Boller, Director of Apparel for Jordan Brand)

Other Marketplace Factors

The campaign was supported by basic product placement of the Jordan Lifestyle apparel collection with tastemakers and other celebrities. It was also supported post-launch through PR surrounding the music video premiere on BET's 106th & Park music video program.

Budget: \$500–\$999 thousand

Campaign Reach: *National*

Media Channels: *TV, Trade/Professional, Consumer Magazine, OOH, PR, Interactive/Online*

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