Nike is most talked about apparel brand among Gen Z as Abercrombie falls out of favor

By Robin Driver - 28 August 2018

A recent study of teenagers’ conversations by Engagement Labs has found that they are moving away from traditional youth brands such as Abercrombie & Fitch, as Nike continues to cement its position as a Gen-Z favorite.

The study, which focused on offline conversations between consumers aged 13 to 20, found that Nike was the most talked about apparel and footwear brand, discussed by 11.2% of teens, up 34% since 2013.

In the cross-category rankings, Nike came in fifth, behind iPhone, Apple, Coca Cola and Samsung. Walmart took seventh place, with 9.5% (up 20%), behind McDonald’s and ahead of Pepsi.
The study also found that in the apparel sector, youth brands such as Abercrombie & Fitch, Hollister and Aeropostale have lost ground with Gen-Z consumers in the last five years.

According to Engagement Labs, reduced interest in these heavily mall-reliant retailers could well reflect a wider trend, as young consumers move away from destination retail, increasingly preferring convenience store-style spaces. The same shift is responsible for declines in discussions concerning retailers such as Nordstrom, JCPenney, Kohl’s, Macy’s, Kmart, Sears, and TJ Maxx.

Athletic shoes brands such as Reebok, Converse, Vans and Puma were also identified as having lost out with Gen Z over the last five years, a result which somewhat contradicts the findings of a recent Piper Jaffray study which named Vans among the most popular footwear brands with Gen Zers.

In any case, as highlighted by Engagement Labs’ own report, the decline does not appear to be a category-wide trend, as sports footwear brand Nike snatched one of the highest positions in this latest study’s overall rankings.

“Gen Z is highly social, online and offline, with greater conversational engagement than adults in most consumer categories,” said Engagement Labs CEO Ed Keller in a release. “As important as the trends may be, there are plenty of brands that are succeeding despite them. No matter which category you’re in, the key to connecting with Generation Z is to listen—and learn.”

The study’s focus on conversations between consumers takes its lead from a previous report from Engagement Labs which demonstrated that discussions about brands were behind on average 19% of consumer purchases, accounting for somewhere between $7 and $10 trillion in annual sales.

The full “Gen Z: The Total Social Generation” is available to download on Engagement Labs’ website.

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