

Sneakerhead Subculture

CB in Action Assignment (Sample)
Marketing 3320 – Consumer Behavior
Semester 20xx
Student Name(s)



Image Credit:
<https://www.fox.com/2018/08/24/air-jordan-6-release-date/>



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\$1 Billion Resale Market for Sneakers

[Check out this video \(9.08 minutes\) on “Meet the Sneakerheads Driving the Massive \\$1 Billion Resale Market.”](#) Source: *Business Insider* (2016) video on YouTube

Video Overview: “Sneakers are a \$55 billion global industry. According to sneakerhead data website StockX, the secondary market for rare and limited-release sneakers is estimated to be worth over \$1 billion. This is fueled by Nike and its long standing Jordan brand. People wait in lines for hours and spend tens of thousands of dollars just to get their hands on the latest pair of sneakers. To understand the world of sneaker collectors — better known as ‘sneakerheads’ — we spoke with those who know it best, including collector Lex Sadler and dealer Jae Tips, top New York City resellers Flight Club and Stadium Goods, as well as SOLEcial Studies teacher Fresco Wilson.”

Source: *Business Insider* (2016) video on YouTube

NOTES: Use your opening slides to get attention and actively engage readers in your topic — perhaps with a story, video, “fun fact,” thought-provoking quote or question, or another type of attention-getter. The headline and video on this slide help to get attention and engage readers in the topic by demonstrating what a “big business” the sneaker resale market is. This slide also helps to establish the importance of the topic. [When you integrate videos, specify for your readers what they are clicking on and the length of each video.]

What is a Sneakerhead?



- “Consumers totally consumed with the buying, selling, re-buying, reselling and publicizing of sneakers” (Deutsch, Byrne, Powers, and Sargent, 2015)
- “A person who collects trades and/or admires sneakers as a form of hobby” (Powell, 2014)
- “Sneakerheads, like most collectors, are passionate and dedicated to their subject. Many are very knowledgeable about the origins and history of sneakers. Many spend a great deal of time and money studying the category and its past, while building their collections.” (Powell, 2014)

Image Credit: <http://www.sneakerhead.com/ain/forums/default/sneakerhead2/images/cupbook/shirts-slide-3.jpg>

NOTES: After you get attention, use some of the opening slides to explain your CB in Action example. Notice how these two slides on “What is a Sneakerhead” and “Types of Sneakerheads” help to provide some useful background information for readers on this topic.

Types of Sneakerheads

Henry Sergent, author of *kicklockerdc*, a sneaker blog on Tumblr, organizes sneakerheads into three categories (quoted in Deutsch, Byrne, Powers, and Sergent (2015)).

- “The collectors — who collect and don't wear their shoes.”
- “Hypebeasts — who just jump on the bandwagon when there's a big shoe release and care only about the money.”
- “‘True’ sneakerheads who collect what they like and wear their shoes.”

Source: Henry Sergent, quoted in Deutsch, Byrne, Powers, and Sergent (2015)

NOTES: After you get attention, use some of the opening slides to explain your CB in Action example. Notice how these two slides on “What is a Sneakerhead” and “Types of Sneakerheads” help to provide some useful background information for readers on this topic.

Functions of Culture - Chapter 9, LO1, Page 181



In sneakerhead subculture, the meaning of the shoes is *much deeper*, as the quotations below from our readings illustrate. We have added yellow highlights to emphasize some of the *deeper meanings* of sneakers in this subculture.

"When a sneakerhead puts on a pair of Air Jordan 1s, or 4s, or 11s, they are slipping into the historical legacy of the greatest basketball player of all time, encapsulated in a plush leather package." (Glazman, 2016)

“[Sneaker collecting is] an addition that has spread through all classes and ethnicities, signifying meaning in everything from social status to gender politics.” (Jackman, 2019)

Image Credit: http://www.shutterstock.com/stock/stockimages/714180003img_714180034_sneakers1

Image Credit: <http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/stock-photo/71818000/boy-71818004-answern1.jpg>

NOTES: On this slide, the connection to CB course concepts is clear. The students reference a key course concept, “Culture Gives Meaning,” provide a chapter and page number, and then explain some of the meanings of sneakers in this subculture. The students use two outside sources for support for the points on this slide (Glazman 2016 and Jackman 2019).

Specialized Language

Language as an Element of Culture - Chapter 9, LO4, Page 195

Language is one important element of culture and many cultures and subcultures have their own language. Below are some language terms that are specific to the sneakerhead subculture, with examples of each word in use. For the complete list of from which I drew these language samples, see *Sole Collector (2015)*.

- **B-Grade:** "Discounted and outlet quality sneakers that didn't meet quality control standards. How resellers get rich."
Usage: "You got B-Grade Banned 1s? You weak, son."
- **Beaters:** "Shoes you wear regularly and don't care about cleaning up. Unless you're trying to be a cool guy. In that case, you may have worn them twice to stunt on Instagram."
Usage: "Had to make a bodega run, so I threw on my beaters."
- **Deadstock:** "Dead, as in the stock that doesn't sell and sits on shelves. Nowadays, deadstock or DS is used to describe an unworn pair of shoes."
Usage: "I like searching old sneaker stores for deadstock gems."
- **N00B:** "Also known as newb, a term used to describe people that are late to the bandwagon and overtly try to fit in despite their lack of knowledge."
Usage: "This N00B is trying to school me on sneakers?"

Source: Sole Collector (2015)

NOTES: On this slide, the connection to CB course concepts is clear. The students reference a key course concept, "Specialized Language within a Subculture," provide a chapter and page number, and then give examples of some language from this subculture. The students use one outside source for support for the points on this slide (Sole Collector 2015).

Evolution of Sneakerhead Subculture

Some cultures evolve from “underground” to “mainstream” over time, as emphasized in the quote from Tommie Battle (2016) below.

“There were always collectors, going back as far as sneakers have been around, but now these companies had a vehicle to reach the masses directly. Now, what was once a nuanced, underground street culture had turned into an emerging mass-consumer business with levels to it. Rappers were getting in on the act, becoming brand ambassadors and starting their own clothing lines and sneaker collaborations. Shops had exclusives, and the evolution of the camp-out and release-day madness would soon occur. It would set the tone for the way things are handled a decade later, for better or for worse.” Battle (2016)

NOTES: The ideas on slides 7, 8, and 9 show good critical thinking from the students about how the sneakerhead subculture is becoming more mainstream. To strengthen these slides, incorporate specific course concepts in the analysis, including chapter and page numbers.

Evolution of Sneakerhead Subculture

The specific forms of *influence* that a subculture has on a larger culture is another way that subcultures evolve. In this quote from Andrew Luecke (2019) in “The Ten Most Influential Subcultures of the Decade,” he emphasizes how the sneakerhead subculture led to entirely new business sectors.

“Flipping [sneakers] became so popular and lucrative during the 2010s, that it inspired a whole new business sector, spurring the creation of sneaker reselling platform StockX and growing apps like DePop into international phenomena, all while injecting sneakerhead and hypebeast slang into mainstream conversations. Now, in the last months of 2019, one’s middle-aged mother is just as likely to know what ‘grail’ means in this context as your 14-year-old cousin is. And that’s huge. Over the past decade, it’s clear, sneakerheads and hypebeasts made the world their own.” (Luecke, 2019)

NOTES: See comment on Slide 7.

Evolution of Sneakerhead Subculture

For more insight into the sneakerhead subculture becoming more mainstream, [click on this 4.29 minute video on “How Sneaker Culture Went from Subculture to Mainstream.”](#)

Video Overview: "It started as a subculture, but has since become full-blown mainstream. Find out how sneaker culture evolved into a global phenomenon thanks to the explosion of hip-hop and sports."



Image Credit:
https://thebigafter.files.wordpress.com/2015/05/1561432_editor.jpg

NOTES: See comment on Slide 7.

References

- Battle, Tommie (2016), "How Sneaker Culture Has Changed in the Past 10 Years," Complex Blog, February 22, <https://www.complex.com/sneakers/2016/02/how-sneaker-culture-has-changed-in-the-past-10-years/>. [Industry Blog]
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- Jackman, Jade (2019), "For True Sneakerheads, Every Shoe Tells a Story," Huck Magazine, May 21, <https://www.huckmag.com/art-and-culture/style/sdc-jackman-sneakerhead-subculture/>. [Fashion Magazine]
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- Powell, Matt (2014), "Sneakeronomics: Are Sneakerheads Important?" Forbes, May 21, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/mattpowell/2014/05/21/sneakeronomics-are-sneakerheads-important/#177942db3684>. [Business News Publication]
- Sole Collector (2015), "The Essential Guide to Sneaker Vocabulary: What You Need to Know," August 9, solecollector.com, <https://solecollector.com/news/guide-to-sneaker-terms/>. [Industry Blog]

NOTES: This slide deck draws support from nine outside sources. Remember to include at least the minimum of six required sources. Remember to LABEL each type of source to demonstrate that you have incorporated at least three different kinds of sources.

Image Credits

To make the set of slides *cleaner*, use hyperlinks instead of full links for the image credits, and then prepare a slide at the end with all of the image credits.

Here are some examples of possible entries for the Image Credits slide.

Slide #1 Image on Left: http://cdn.frank151.com/wp-content/uploads/Sneakerhead_FRANK151_5-e1440528512549.jpg

Slide #1 Image on Right: <http://sites.psu.edu/drg5241/wp-content/uploads/sites/2433/2013/01/sneakers.jpg>

Some Notes about the Slide Deck - from Dr. Gravois

Overall, the students did a very nice job on this assignment. Some key strengths include:

- Interesting topic that demonstrates Consumer Behavior in Action.
- Good opening slides (get attention, explain topic).
- Very good connections to specific course concepts on slides 5 and 6.
- Good job using a variety of sources, including videos, news articles, and industry blogs. Adding one or more research sources would have added good value.
- Good use of navigation sentences, such as telling readers when to click on a video, a quick blurb about the content of each video, and the length of each video.

One key weakness is that the CB course concept connections in this slide deck are all from one unit (Unit 2 – External Influences on CB). **A key requirement of the assignment is for students to make CB course concept connections to three or more units.**

Some ideas for improvement include:

- On slides 7, 8, and 9, the ideas show good critical thinking from the students about how the sneakerhead subculture is becoming more mainstream. To strengthen those slides, incorporate specific course concepts into the analysis, including chapter and page numbers. **Without the mention of specific course concepts, it is not clear that the students met the requirement to incorporate four course concepts into the analysis.**
- The slides would benefit from more visual appeal.
- Here are some resources that would have also been interesting for the students to include:
 - Perhaps integrate a song (or two) that relate to the topic, plus some commentary on how the song relates to the analysis, such as the song "Wings" and/or "Sneakerhead."
 - Perhaps integrate discussion of the Sneakercon event (www.sneakercon.com) into the analysis.
 - It also would have been helpful for the students to explain the difference between sneakerhead and hypebeast.