# One Team, One Dream: What Marketers Can Learn From Dove and Nike Partnership

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Dove and Nike have teamed up to launch the Body Confident Sport program with a mission to boost girls’ body confidence in sports. The Body Confident Sport program is a first-to-market, providing a scientifically proven set of online coaching tools to build body confidence in 11 to 17-year-old girls.

It’s a match made in partnership heaven: Dove is one of the world’s largest providers of self-esteem and body confidence education and Nike is one of the world’s biggest champions of athletes and sports. Who better to team up then these two brands who have been on a journey to build more inclusive brands and communities?

It’s never easy to find the right brand partnership, where values and missions are aligned from the start, especially when considering what role brands can play in helping to tackle some of the biggest challenges facing society today. Marketers, using the Dove x Nike partnership as a blueprint, here are three questions to ask yourselves when considering whether this is the right partnership for your brand.

## Why is this the right fit and partnership?

Both Dove and Nike have a long-term commitment to building more inclusive brands. They have both had their ups and downs on their journey and remain committed to solving societal problems affecting their consumers. By teaming up, they can have a bigger impact.

Dove has been equipping the next generation with tools to help build confidence and self-esteem. For over 15 years, Dove's self-esteem project has been helping parents, mentors, teachers and youth leaders deliver self-esteem education, reaching over 60 million young people to date.

"Sports have the potential to make girls feel confident and strong, yet for so many, the judgment and criticism they face within the sports environment is damaging their confidence and limiting their self-belief. We are proud to team up with a like-minded brand like Nike to take action towards a more equitable future for girls—on and off the field," says Alessandro Manfredi, chief marketing officer of Dove.

Nike also has a strong commitment to drive positive change for girls and their communities. Just last year, more than 375,000 girls accessed play and sport through Nike Inc. partners' diverse programs. Nike has equipped more than 17,000 coaches with resources to create more inclusive experiences for kids.

"Globally, girls face complex cultural and social barriers, and they also enter sports later and drop out of sports earlier. Our partnership with Dove, and unique focus on coaching through body confidence, aims to change that. By shifting the conversation from what their bodies look like to what their bodies can do—so more girls can stay in sports and

experience the benefits—we believe we're creating the next generation of female leaders and changemakers who will move the world forward." says Vanessa Garcia-Brito, VP and chief social and community impact officer of Nike, Inc.

Marketers, remember to ensure that you both enter a partnership with the same objectives in mind. For example, if your prospective partner doesn't have a track record of committing to diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, why are they interested now? Are you better off tackling the problem alone? Or, in the case of Dove and Nike, is working together going to result in a bigger and better impact?

## How can you tackle the problem together?

Dove and Nike embarked on the journey to develop Body Confident Sport by grounding themselves in research and understanding the consumer. They partnered with the Centre for Appearance Research and the Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport. The brands co-developed this work for over two years, including input from girls and coaches globally in France, India, Japan, Mexico, the U.K. and the U.S.

According to the study commissioned by both brands, we now know that:

- In the US, 48% of girls dropping out were told they don't have the right body for sports.
- 51% of girls dropping out were told that they were not good enough.
- Yet 69% said they would be more body confident if they had stayed in sport for longer.

With these findings, the brands were able to embark on the impact they wanted to make together. Marketers, remember that partnering to find the right insights is critical for a successful partnership. Without aligning to key consumer insights you want to address, it will be difficult to bring

this partnership to life.

## How will you invest in bringing this partnership to life?

Both Dove and Nike were willing partners to invest in this partnership. The research they commissioned became the basis for what they would bring to the marketplace. Each brand brought key influencers to the partnership—Dove with Venus Williams and Nike with Laurie Hernandez.

Finally, the Body Confident Sport program is the culmination of the partnership. It provides coaches with the materials they need to increase girls' body confidence, body image and self-esteem through sports. And keep girls from dropping out of sports. The program consists of three online interactive modules you can complete at your own pace: Introducing Body Image; Tackling Negative Body Image; Promoting Body Image. The brands aim to upskill any caring adult who is invested in helping young people succeed on and off the field. Coaches can include volunteers, teachers, parents, guardians, caregivers and siblings.

Marketers, remember that a successful partnership also means each party is willing to invest the time, money and resources to make an impact. Partnerships can't be one sided, or a check-the-box initiative. Dove and Nike remind us of what great partnerships can look like, the power that can be unlocked when two industry titans come together to build a more inclusive world for sports for all of our girls.

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