

Going Global: Athleta's Plan to Enter the German Market

Prepared by: Alexa Radice, Kenleigh Theis, Victoria Dupre, and Emily Keir



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Athleta is a leading activewear brand that successes come from giving women comfortable yet fashionable fitness apparel. Athleta currently has 206 stores throughout the United States and a thriving online shop with Gap Inc managing the company. Different from Gap's ready-to wear-brands like Banana Republic and Old Navy, Athleta is uniquely targeted towards women's athleisure. Athleta has an extensive variety of products from every season and fitness activity such as yoga apparel, training and high performance gear, fall apparel, footwear, and accessories. With such success in the United States, Athleta should expand their enterprise and enter into the international marketplace, with its first market being Germany. In the Summer of 2025, Athleta will launch a Fall Sport Training line in Berlin, Germany that excels that company's globalization efforts.

Action Overview

While focusing on expanding internationally, Athleta will maintain their highly valued and quality brand. Their core values: women for women, inclusive community, and people & planet will be prevalent throughout the in-store location, athlete sponsorships, and their online websites and apps. Athleta is unique in the athleisure industry because the brand solely focuses on women's clothing. While Athleta offers styles and sizes for women of all ages, the fall training line that will be launched in Berlin will be targeting the Generation Z and Millennial women because these age ranges are constantly developing and changing. This age range of women also tend to be knowledgeable about social media and looking for affordable prices. Athleta hopes to be as successful at conducting direct and habitual communication with their consumers in Germany as it was in the United States. Direct and positive communication will build loyal female consumers who feel confident and inspired. The company plans to partner with German track and field star, Alica Schmidt, and other international athletes to create buzz about their new apparel and accessories. Schmidt as well as other athletes will empower these women to exceed their expectations.

Conclusions

In conclusion, Athleta will join the international marketplace by opening its new store in Berlin, Germany in the Summer of 2025. Athleta's Fall Sports Training line will allow all women of all shapes and sizes to feel confident and empowered while on the move. Athleta Berlin will measure its goals of increasing sales, growing its market share, and building brand loyalty by measuring Customer Lifetime Value KPIs, monitoring market share, and tracking sales success.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

The Company

History

Athleta, Inc. is a women's activewear brand that was created in 1998. Founded in Petaluma, California, Athleta thrived as an online brand. In 2008, Athleta was acquired by major international clothing retailer and brand, Gap, Inc. for 150 million dollars (Rosenbloom). With Gap's e-commerce platform and iconic brands (including Banana Republic and Old Navy), Athleta's customer base skyrocketed. Since the acquisition, Athleta has grown from an online only brand to having a major retail and catalog presence.

Offerings

Athleta's product offerings include cutting-edge athletic and athleisure apparel, including: leggings, tank tops, sports bras, rain and wind gear, and swimwear. The brand offers full lines of workout essentials, workwear, and cozy styles. Their large array of styles are affordable, unbelievable in quality, and always represent one of the most inclusive size ranges in the industry.

Mission

Nancy Green, CEO and President of Athleta writes, "[Athleta creates] a product that meets a woman's unique needs; by breaking down stereotypes of female strength and beauty and uniting women to reach their limitless potential" (Finkle). Centered around empowering women, Athleta launched the hugely successful "Power of the She" campaign. The campaign vision is to inspire girls and women to embrace their bodies and feel confident inside and outside of the gym. This campaign message has become central to the core of the Athleta's brand. This is in direct opposition to the common, "shrink it and pink it" marketing strategies commonly used by other women's brands (Our story: Athleta then & now). Instead of only offering small sizes and "girly" colors and packaging, Athleta celebrates strong women and is inclusive to all communities.

Culture

Athleta strives to "ignite a community of active, healthy, confident women and girls who empower each other to reach their limitless potential. The mission of Athleta is to encourage an active lifestyle and to motivate confident females to reach their highest capabilities. This goal is reached through their brand beliefs of diversity, encouragement, and acceptance. In order to act on the things that the brand stands for, Athleta has invested 2 million dollars in causes dedicated to female empowerment. They are committed to creating a positive social and environmental impact, without compromising performance.

Logo

The athleta logo is a purple circle with a floral white image that appears to be moving in a direction. The purple is to illustrate balance, composure, and femininity. The small white triangles are symmetric and symbolize equality and inclusiveness.

Ongoing Activities

Athleta continuously promotes their high quality products by emphasizing their sustainability standards. Under the leadership of Nancy Green, the President and CEO of Athleta, ongoing aggressive sustainability goals were put in place and created a standard for the brand to uphold and promote. They only use fabrics like nylon, organic cotton, and recycled polyester in order to preserve the amount of energy, water, and dyes used. These materials also use no chemicals such as fertilizers or pesticides, upholding Athleta's goal of providing the best products made from the best materials. Moreover, Athleta has partnered with multiple world renowned women, ranging from athletes to singers, in order to promote the idea of female empowerment across the globe.

The Market

Factors Influencing the German Market

Germany is an intercultural and multi-religious country home to over 80 million people. Sports are an integral part of German society with most Germans being active participants or enthusiastic fans. Healthier and more active lifestyles are becoming more popular in this already extremely sports focused society. Activewear and leisure apparel in Europe are increasing at a growth rate of 7.2% a year, with Germany being the largest European importer of sports fashion. Women's athleisure and sports apparel make up a substantial amount of imports (The European market potential for fashion sportswear). Germany is home to successful sports apparel companies that would serve as Athleta's main competitors, most notably, Puma and Adidas.

German business culture is described as one that places high priority on planning and precision. All business relationships are very formal and Germans observe a strict established business hierarchy. German companies respect decisions made at the top of the company. Punctuality is regarded as a high priority as well as adherence to firm agendas (Germany: Business practices). To build and maintain business relationships, Athleta understands it is essential to respect the established cultural business practices.

Germany boasts the world's fourth largest economy in the world. It operates under an economic union made up of twenty seven countries known as the European Union. Germany's economic power allows the country to be the European Union's most politically and economically influential member nation. Like all other member states of the European Union, the official currency of Germany is the euro. Its economy is based on "exports of high quality manufactured goods" (2022 Index of Economic Freedom). Germany's GDP per capita currently stands at almost 42,780 euros and is forecasted to exceed 55,566 euros by 2025 (O'Neill).

SWOT Analysis:

In order to gain a well-rounded understanding of Athleta's place in the athleisure market, we must analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the company itself, as well as the opportunities and threats, as they affect Athleta's position in this market.

First, looking at the strengths of the company, Athleta charges a competitive price for the industry they operate in, keeping themselves relevant within the market as producing high quality products. However, from a comparison standpoint, Athleta maintains a competitive advantage in that their price point is much more affordable than their closest competitor, Lululemon. Athleta's basic yoga pants sell at a price of \$69, while those of Lululemon sell for \$98. Moreover, Athleta's product offerings include unique designs and are made with very high quality fabrics and sustainable materials. They also manufacture their products using ethical practices, making them an attractive brand as a whole. All of their products are made using sustainable practices in order to achieve optimal quality. Athleta's devotion to creating products through sustainable practices keeps them top-of-mind, especially in the German market as they value solutions to current environmental and climate challenges. Specifically, the European Green Deal "has set unprecedented sustainability ambitions for the European Union and calls for transformational change across society" (European Environment Agency). These fabrics increase the longevity of their brands and thus, their overall value to the consumer. Athleta leggings are made to last up to five years, whereas Lululemon leggings generally wear out after about a year. This can also be seen as a strength in terms of brand loyalty as consumers see that quality equates to longevity which keeps people coming back to buy more of Athleta's products. Additionally, Athleta has a wide array of products that will allow the organization to adapt to the wants and needs of the German customer base.

Along with the strengths of the organization come their weaknesses within the industry and as a whole. While German consumers are supportive of the athleisure industry, the Athleta brand is essentially unknown in Germany. German consumers are further unaware of the Athleta brand as the company does not ship its products internationally. Athleta also has a very low customer service rating of 1.75/5 stars, which hurts the credibility and reputability of the brand, possibly preventing the entry of new customers and hurting customer retention rates. Poor customer service can impede brand loyalty, just as ineffectual customer complaint management could result in negative word of mouth for Athleta. These things have the potential to negatively affect business success in a new market.

As we move into the German market, Athleta is presented with new opportunities to capitalize on and become extremely profitable. Moving into a new region means that the brand opens itself up to a new consumer base. As female German consumers' needs, wants, and preferences are changing, there is an opportunity to take advantage of trends and reflect them in the products we release. With German society being extremely sports focused, we are able to capitalize on these

interests with our new product line, consisting of women's sports training gear that can be worn on and off the field, inside and outside the gym. Also, the athleisure trend is continuing to boost sportswear sales in Germany, an area where Athleta can thrive in and stand out with their high quality products. There is an increasing demand for activewear brands in Germany which presents a great opportunity for Athleta. Another opportunity that our team plans to target has to do with the recent rise in German disposable income and increase in the affluent customer base. The gross disposable income of households per capita has reached an all time high in 2021, which creates an incredible opportunity for Athleta to enter the market with their products. Because the German consumer lifestyle has been improved as a result of this increase, there has been a higher level of consumption of goods. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic skyrocketed the popularity of all-day athleisure wear as daily routines were altered to at-home only. With this global and cultural shift, the demand for athleisure clothing has continued to increase and brands like Athleta can easily capitalize off of it. As the German people are still getting over the pandemic and the lasting effects of it, Athleta can continuously provide their consumers with new and unique products to keep things fresh and appealing to these consumers. Finally, the high levels of online engagement from the German population makes reaching Athleta's target market easier. This will allow the brand to utilize ecommerce and media strategies to promote new products and increase brand awareness before, during, and after the German market entry.

The biggest threats that Athleta will face as they enter the German market is the high competition within the sportswear and athleisure industry. In Germany, Athleta will face competition from other industry leaders, especially, Lululemon, Adidas, Puma, and Nike. However, none of these competitors make clothing exclusively for women.

GOAL

Focus

Athleta's goal is to begin operations in the German market by Summer 2025 by promoting its Fall Sports Training Line at its new location in Berlin. In Berlin, the goal of Athleta is to build a direct relationship with consumers and develop a loyal customer base. Launching Athleta in Germany will give the brand the opportunity to become an international giant in this industry by answering the demand for athleisure wear that is fashionable and functional. Athleta's general, monetary, and strategic goals are further outlined below in regard to each of the Five C categories below:

Collaborator Objectives:

In the United States, Athleta gained 33% more brand awareness by partnering with gymnast Simone Biles (Stych). Athleta plans to expand their partnerships and collaborate with successful German female athletes like Alica Schmidt in hopes of creating inclusive and international partnerships.

Competitor Objectives:

Athleta strives to create a competitive advantage over its current competitors including Adidas, Lululemon and Puma by serving as a comfortable and affordable athleisure apparel store both in person and online. Athleta will broaden its reach to an international audience and have more available products for existing customers to choose from.

Company Objectives:

Athleta plans to increase our company's market share and become the leader in our industry in the German marketplace. Athleta will focus on customer service objectives and product quality in order to achieve company financial, general, and strategic goals.

Context/ Climate Objectives:

Futbol is undoubtedly Germany's most popular sport. Following futbol's popularity, golf, tennis, cycling, handball, and motorsport are hugely popular in the German sports arena (Sports in Germany). All of these sports are generally played in the fall and summer seasons. Athleta plans to release their Fall line in the Summer of 2025 to give consumers the clothes they need to enter the most important sporting season of the year.

Customer Objectives:

Athleta's mobile app, AthletaWell is an engaging digital platform that connects customers to the brand directly. Through the app, Athleta will build a direct relationship with customers by giving them a platform to submit insights and input, as well as connect with other customers.

AthletaWell has contributed to brand loyalty in the United States, and will do the same in Germany as customers will feel included in Athleta's community of confident women. By connecting with customers online as well as in retail stores, Athleta's brand loyalty and customer satisfaction will grow.

Benchmark

Athleta uses precision and specific criteria to achieve these goals for the brand. Athleta plans to launch its first store in Berlin, Germany with an exciting and innovative fall sports training line. The new line will be promoted during the summer of 2025. This time of the year was strategically chosen because it will allow time to attract consumers to the in store location as well as welcoming more women into the online community. Further, this new line will gain excitement amongst our target market as Germany's most important sporting season begins in the fall. Athleta aims to increase sales and grow their market share while establishing a strong sense of customer loyalty.

Quantitatively, Athleta has experienced large levels of success online and in stores in the United States. According to the fourth quarter and fiscal year 2021 results provided by Gap Inc, Athleta

is scheduled to reach \$2 billion in net sales by the 2023 fiscal year due to its consistent quality, comfort, and inclusivity (Gap Inc.. reports fourth quarter and fiscal year 2021 results; provides 2022 outlook). This growth in America is encouraging for Athleta Berlin as our Germany store is forecasted to have similar sales success. Our team will keep close track of our sales to ensure growth by monitoring Athleta's net sales over a five year period. Our goal is for sales to continue to exceed each previous period. Further, a study conducted by marketing specialist Francesca Schorer found that Athleta's products are regarded as "high in quality" by consumers (Schorer). Athleta's new line will continue to provide great quality clothing, allowing Athleta to become a market leader. Our team will monitor market share and percentages of sales in the German sportswear/ athleisure market.

Temporally, Athleta will provide consumers with the exciting new experience of becoming part of a community intended to empower women. By use of our AthletaWell mobile app, consumers will feel connected to the brand, therefore allowing Athleta to achieve their goal of customer loyalty. This will also contribute quantitatively to Athleta's sales success as Over half of Athleta's sales are from brand loyal members, who spend almost double the amount of money as the average customer (Stych). We will follow the KPI for loyalty (Customer Lifetime Value (CLV)) in order to measure the satisfaction of current and existing customers.

Athleta will monitor the benchmarks outlined above in order to compare to competitors in the industry, identify potential competitive advantages, and achieve company goals.

STRATEGY

Target Market

Athleta is differentiated as an activewear company as the brand has a unique focus on women. As aforementioned, Athleta has a focus on empowering and inspiring everyday women and fitness gurus alike. While Athleta does have an Athleta Girl line, Athleta currently targets American women between the ages of fifteen and forty. In Germany, our goal is to appeal to this demographic and identify a similar market segment. Athleta Berlin will direct its marketing efforts towards German women of all shapes, sizes, and fitness levels. We are specifically focusing on members of Generation Z and Millennials as women in these groups belong to an age range synonymous with change, development, and growth. Athleta aims to empower these women as they pursue sports and fitness through different stages in life. Further, these groups belong to generations that understand the digital world and will interact with our online content. Germany is the perfect location for Athleta to expand into as sports make up a large part of German life. Coming Summer 2025, our Fall line will answer the demand for athletic wear just in time for futbol season, Germany's most popular sport. Athleta's target market is further illustrated below through Porter's Five Forces model.

Porter's Five Forces Model:

1. Competitors

- Lululemon: Lululemon and Athleta maintain a competitive rivalry across athleisure products as both companies carry products that combine sports apparel and fashion. Lululemon already has a presence in Germany and has dominated this industry. However, the company has experienced a drop in sales due to poor relation handling.
- Nike: Nike is a worldwide leader in athletic gear. Nike is an internationally known brand that already has stores in Germany and across Europe. However, Nike targets high skill fitness gurus whereas Athleta products are made for many athletic activities of varying intensity.
- Adidas: Adidas's roots and headquarters are located in Germany, posing a major domestic threat to Athleta. Adidas sponsors many influential athletes and teams throughout the world.
- Puma: Similarly to Adidas, Puma is also headquartered in Germany. Puma is the sponsor of several successful sports teams and is working towards transitioning to fashionable activewear.

2. Supplier Power

Germany is considered to be one of the manufacturing capitals of Europe. Sustainability and quality is at the forefront of the Athleta brand. Germany is known for its many different manufacturers, suppliers, and wholesalers that provide high quality, sustainability made products. Athleta will have the opportunity to work closely with these suppliers which will allow the company to make a smooth transition into the German marketplace. The abundance of German suppliers will make the Athleta brand much more attractive to German consumers as they will be provided with locally made clothing.

3. Buyer Power

Germany is a mass consumer society which means the majority of Germans enjoy the benefits of purchasing a wide range of consumer goods (*Germany: Reaching the consumer*). There is a high purchasing power density in Germany's largest cities, including Berlin. Further, Berlin is considered to be a tourist destination which will increase traffic and sales.

4. Substitutes

Outside of the athleisure/ sportswear industry, ethically made German outerwear, outdoor gear, and loungewear companies could potentially serve as Athleta substitutes. Hessnatur, Grüne Erde, and Schöffel are all German brands with a primary focus on fashionable and functional clothing.

5. New Entrants

The athleisure industry is rapidly rising in popularity and therefore will attract companies seeking to enter the German marketplace. The threat of new entrants in Germany is strong in this industry, particularly brands that already have an international presence. Brands such as Champion, Vuori, and Alo Yoga are already competitors in the global

market but have not yet entered Germany. If they were to enter the German marketplace, they would pose a threat to Athleta.

Value Proposition

Customers:

Over half of Athleta's sales are from brand loyal members, who spend almost double the amount of money as the average customer. Athleta is confident that with this new fall sports training line that the company will be able to appeal to these loyal customers and gain the support of new customers in a new market. Athleta has built a loyal customer base over the years and will continue to keep these relationships strong by launching new, high quality, and necessary products to this customer base to keep them engaged and happy.

Collaborators:

Athleta's main objective of moving to the Germany market is to provide value to its collaborators. Celebrity and famous athlete collaborations will help boost Athleta into the correct target market in Germany and will boost Athleta's overall sales. By having celebrity collaborations with Athleta, the brand will be able to boost overall brand recognition and really connect with the customer base. These celebrity and athlete collaborators will become a huge portion of Athleta and the way the athleisure company is seen throughout the world. These collaborators will help the company by showing off the brand to their fans and followers as well as they will receive the new fall sports training line themselves.

Company Stakeholders:

Athleta is dedicated to giving company stakeholders the best outcome they could possibly ask for with increased value of the company and more. Athleta is committed to increasing the overall revenue of the athleisure company and is confident that this will happen with the introduction of the fall sports training line. The introduction of this new line will boost Athleta's brand recognition and provide new and relevant athleisure wear for the customers. The introduction of this line will also help grow the customer base as Athleta is expanding into new markets around the world and as athleisure brands are highly rising in popularity across the globe.

TACTICS

Market Offering

Product

Launching in Summer 2025, Athleta will introduce its new women's line focused on athletic training products for Fall sporting activities. This line will include leggings, sports bras, biker shorts, windbreakers, headbands, and a long sleeved top. These products will be offered in mostly dark and neutral colors, as most Germans prefer to dress in these tones. These products are specifically made to be functional for athletes and will be unrestrictive. The clothing in this

line will be lightweight, yet thick, serving as the perfect products for fall as the weather grows cooler. Some of the products will be wind and cold resistant. As always, all of the product offerings included in this line will be ethically sourced and sustainably made.



Brand

Athleta is a valued and quality brand that is becoming increasingly popular. It is centered around empowering women and striving for greatness. This is an invitation for customers to join a community where they can not only purchase useful products but feel wanted by the brand. Their core values are: women for women, inclusive community, and people & planet. Athleta's products exhibit their values through environmentally-friendly fabrics that are comfortable to be in. Athleta has also become a Certified B Corporation to evaluate accountability involving sustainability. The summer product launch illustrates flexibility in the weather and a variety of opportunities to wear the apparel. The company has created an open and inclusive environment as well as an accessible digital platform. These outlets encourage women to reach their fullest potential. The new Fall line introduces Athleta to a new market with an influx of consumers desiring athleisure. The new products introduced at this location will generate buzz around the Athleta brand and target sports loving women that desire clothing that is both comfortable and makes them feel good. By including clothing pieces for different types of exercise impact, sports, and supports, we are targeting a wider population of German women with differing preferences and needs. We want to be the first choice when these women think about purchasing new athletic/athleisure clothing, and we want to be known as pricing a wide variety of options with the best quality that lasts the longest. Ultimately, we want to provide the most value to this set of customers and gain credibility within this new market.

Price

As aforementioned, Athleta prides themselves on the high quality materials they manufacture their products with and the sustainable practices they use throughout the entire production process. With these benefits come higher costs, however, Athleta is committed to remaining as an

affordable high-end athleisure brand. Our windbreakers will be priced at \$70, or \$85 for a more insulated version. Our leggings will be \$80, or \$85 with pockets. Similarly, the biker shorts will be priced at \$45, or \$50 with pockets. Our long sleeved top will be priced at \$60, sports bras will be \$50, and headbands will be \$12. As in the United States, Athleta Berlin will regularly have online and in store sales in addition to a semi-annual sale. Athleta's prices allow it to stay competitive within this industry.

Incentives

Creating incentives for both consumers and influencers can drive higher revenue for brands and ultimately increase profitability if executed successfully. Athleta has seen high success from partnering with different famous women in order to drive brand recognition, and at the end of the day, driving sales from new customers. We plan to continue their current incentive program, called "Athleta FitPro Program", which allows professionals to purchase items at a discounted price in exchange for posting photos and sporting their Athleta wardrobe. The sponsors will also have access to exclusive promotions they can give to their own clientele to shop at Athleta. By providing professional athletes with Athleta gear, we encourage them to stimulate positive word of mouth about the brand and convince their followers of the value of the brand.

Promotion

In order to promote this new line of women's athletic training gear in Berlin, we will take advantage of multiple communication channels and utilize influencer marketing. While promotion directly from the brand can be highly successful in markets with high interest for a product, the use of influencer marketing elevates current marketing efforts by relating the product to a specific person's lifestyle and values. Through this, we hope that our product resonates with both fans and followers of our chosen "influencer". We plan to create content to be posted on our current social media channels, specifically Facebook and Instagram, in order to draw interest to the line and provide a direct link to the website where consumers can browse and purchase through in-app services. We want to focus on Facebook and Instagram as they are two of the leading active social media platforms in Germany as of 2021 (Statistica). Refer to Figure 1 in subhead "Exhibits" to view graphical representation of the most popular social media platforms in Germany as of 2021.

In addition to brand created content, we want to produce sponsored ads that connect with our target market in order to direct them to the new line and generate traffic towards the website. This traffic will be measured using different key performance indicators to analyze which advertisements resonate with our consumers the most. We want to capitalize on the power of partnering with influencers that share the same love of athleisure wear as our consumers and that will speak highly of the product quality, goals of the brand, and production of excellence within the industry. We will partner with German women athletes such as Alica Schmidt, a famous German runner, and Alexandra Popp, former Olympic gold medalist, who currently plays for the

German national soccer team. With these partnerships and through their efforts to promote the new Athleta line, we will generate brand recognition within Germany, while also gaining a sense of credibility. One of the advantages of influencer marketing/partnerships is the level of trust that is passed from influencer to brand as they begin endorsing. Current followers and fans of these women athletes will gravitate more towards the brands that they endorse and promote.

Ultimately, we believe that capitalizing on the ecommerce market with this new line of products for women in Germany will be highly successful. According to an article written by Karolina Kulach, “Germany is well-populated with buyers who are smart, savvy, and well acquainted with online shopping. It belongs to the top markets in Europe when it comes to population, Internet use, and total purchasing power”.

Place

Athleta’s new clothing line will be advertised and available at the start of the summer of 2025. The new products will also be available in its new location in Berlin. After establishing a well known presence in Germany, Athleta will continue to build their in store locations throughout the country. Since Athleta’s online shop was the foundation of the company, the new products will also appear on the company’s website and will be able to be shipped throughout Germany and the rest of Europe. A large portion of the Athleta’s product distribution will be through e-commerce and pop-up ads on social media. On Athleta’s online shop, there will be a drop down for the new Summer Training Line which will exhibit the apparel in an organized fashion. Athleta will also provide free shipping for purchases over 50 euros and free returns to improve customer satisfaction.

IMPLEMENTATION

Development

Resource Development

It is imperative that Athleta meets its goals and secure beneficial assets for the company. Since Athleta has been so successful in previous years, Athleta will use cash flows from its operating activities. Athleta must purchase a large enough building for the store to operate as well as finding employees, paying employees, producing the training apparel, and funding research for the most comfortable and sustainable fabrics. Due to the fact that Athleta is a subsidiary of Gap Inc. Athleta clothing is manufactured by select factories that obey Gap Inc. policies. Athleta follows the Code of Vendor Conduct which applies strict requirements for proper environmental and labor standards. Gap Inc. has more than 1000 vendors in over 40 countries worldwide. Athleta will need habitual communication with its manufacturers in order to receive the Summer Training Line before the launch in the Summer of 2025.

Offering Development

Athleta employees are an important factor in the offering development because they will be useful to customers in offering information and advice on products as well as leading the fitness classes that are offered both in store and online. Employees of Athleta will support and live by the values of Athleta and exhibit them when working for the company. Athleta will continue to utilize their research teams to further study the most sustainable and desirable fabrics for their products. Along with a research team, Athleta will need an experienced marketing team to create advertisements and campaigns. The marketing team will have members designated to specific tasks such as running the social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs), the website and their app. Other responsibilities for the marketing team will include overseeing in store designs and displays. Lastly, Athleta must take advantage of their partnerships with international celebrity athletes in order to increase their consumer audience and build excitement and desire for their products. Though these factors will be expensive, they are crucial for brand recognition and awareness. Athleta will need to confidently enter the rigorous German markets and compete in the athleisure industry.

Commercial Development

Athleta employees in both the sales and marketing departments will continue to work diligently to provide commercial resources to the brand and the consumers. Both the sales and marketing team will play a major role in the implementation of commercial development. One major portion of moving the Athleta market globally is making the athleisure brand more accessible to the German population. With the help of the sales and marketing team this can happen by growing both our online advertising and in person advertising in stores. Having a clean and appealing social media is always an important factor in these times as well. By staying up to date on our advertising both in stores and online will help keep our customers up to date and engaged. Launching in Summer 2025 in Berlin will take a lot of commercial development in both the teams because it is very different from launching a line in the United States. Germany is becoming more and more into athleisure wear in the coming years and this line of athleisure from Athleta is perfect for the customer pool in Germany.

Deployment

Athleta plans to open their new store in Berlin, Germany and rollout this new line of women's fall training gear in Summer 2025, giving customers time to get acclimated with the brand and the products before the Fall season. Since the Athleta brand will be new to the market and the German people, (and our target market) we wanted to physically allow people to in-store shop and see the products first hand before the ideal time of year for the beginning of certain fall sports. However, aside from the physical grand opening of the store, we plan to begin paid advertising, sponsored social media posts, influencer marketing, and partnerships in February of 2025. We believe that distancing this advertising from the holiday season will keep us top of mind, and prevent our ads from getting lost in the plethora of holiday content. We want to create buzz around the Athleta brand and the products that we are introducing into this new market,

ultimately creating a name for ourselves before we actually roll out the new line. Once we have a brand following in Germany, we will be able to gain more credibility and trust that will allow us to promote more far-fetched products and things that our target market might not be familiar with. Afterall, we want to differentiate ourselves from existing athleisure brands and our competitors and gain a competitive advantage over them.

CONTROL

Performance

Athleta's criteria for evaluating the performance of our new Fall 2025 line will be analyzed through the benchmarks outlined in our "Goals" section. Our team will closely monitor Athleta Berlin's key performance indicators to ensure the store meets its financial goals and experiences the anticipated sales success. Athleta will re-evaluate each of these goals each quarter. If our team deems any of these unrealistic, our top level managers will review and determine new strategies to meet said goals, or set entirely new goals.

Environment

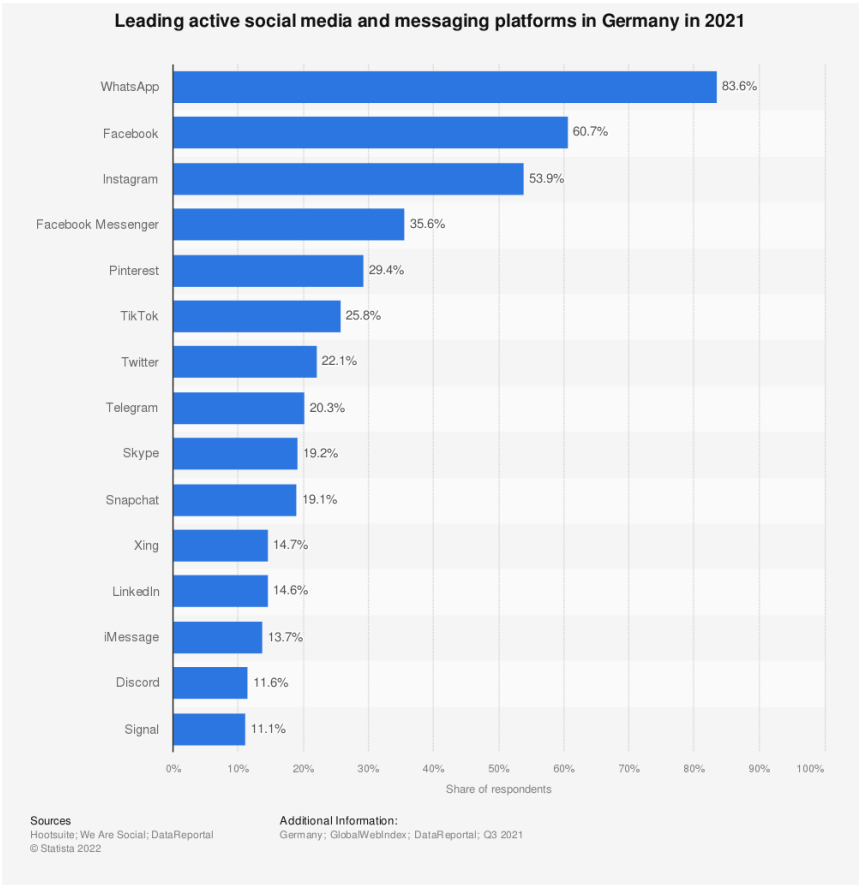
To help monitor the environment, Athleta will have three separate teams to help focus on upcoming opportunities for the company or any threats that arise. The first team will consist of employees focusing on new opportunities for Athleta both in merchandising and in marketing. The second team will focus more on environmental factors that arise after the release of the Fall 2025 line such as what our customers like about it and needs for upcoming lines. This team focuses on keeping up with the changes and trends in the market in order to stay innovative and competitive. The last team will focus on Athleta's competitors and keep an eye out for what they are doing in the current market. By keeping up with competitors, Athleta can gain competitive advantage and present itself in a way that is ahead of the competition.

EXHIBITS

Athleta's plan to enter the German market is one that is supported by Porter's Five Forces theory, SWOT analysis, and a myriad of statistical resources. To create this plan, our team conducted extensive research in order to effectively design a marketing strategy for Athleta to launch its new Fall Sports Training line in Summer 2025 in Berlin, Germany. The charts, graphs, data, and other information used to formulate this plan is cited below.

Graphs and Charts:

Figure 1:



Works Cited

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