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Adidas agrees to buy rival Reebok

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4 August, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Adidas agrees to buy rival Reebok

BNE: German sports goods firm Adidas has bought US rival Reebok in a friendly takeover for \$3.8 billion. The merger is seen as a serious challenge to Nike's dominance in the sportswear world. Adidas hopes to make inroads into the highly lucrative US market, which constitutes half of global sporting goods sales. Adidas also expects Reebok will penetrate deeper into the European market. Adidas boss Herman Hainer said: "This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to combine two of the most respected and well known companies in the worldwide sporting goods industry." He also said the deal represented "a major milestone" for Adidas.

Reebok CEO Paul Fireman considered Adidas as a perfect partner. He said: "With Adidas, we are able to offer an enhanced portfolio of global brands that truly addresses the needs of today's and tomorrow's consumers....Reebok's mission is to enroll global youth through sports, music and technology. This complements Adidas's mission to be the leading sports brand in the world with a focus on performance and international presence." The two companies are expected to sign up famous international stars to elevate their products. Adidas's tie-up with David Beckham has greatly enhanced the company's worldwide profile.

WARM-UPS

1. MY SPORTSWEAR HISTORY: In pairs / groups, talk about the styles and brands of sportswear you have bought over the years. Which are the best brands? What do you like about sportswear? What sportswear do you have now? Change partners often.

2. MY FAVORITE: Write down the name of your favorite sports or clothing brand. Pretend you are the CEO of that company. Introduce yourself to the other “CEOs” in the class and talk about your company. Tell your partner about the company’s past, its current products, why it is such a great company, and the future.

After you have spoken to several students, sit down with a partner and share what you heard.

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Adidas / Reebok / Nike / sportswear / global brands / mergers and takeovers / perfect partners / today’s and tomorrow’s consumers / David Beckham

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. RIVAL: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word “rival”. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. THE BEST BRAND: Talk with your partner(s) about which are the best brands for the following products today and why. Was this the same last year or five years ago? Why have things changed?

- Shoes
- Sunglasses
- Pants
- T-shirt
- Watch
- Music player
- Sweater
- Training suit
- Underwear
- Bag

Change partners and compare what you talked about.

6. QUICK DEBATE: Students A think Nike is the best sports goods company. Students B think Adidas is the best sports goods company. Change partners often.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. Two global sportswear giants are involved in a takeover. T / F
- b. Around fifty per cent of global sportswear sales are made in the U.S. T / F
- c. The Adidas CEO said such takeovers happened every year or so. T / F
- d. The CEO said the deal was a routine acquisition for Adidas. T / F
- e. Reebok's CEO was very unhappy with the takeover. T / F
- f. Reebok wants to attract kids through sports, music and technology. T / F
- g. Adidas's mission is to be the world's number two sports brand. T / F
- h. Adidas's commercial tie-up with David Beckham has been a disaster. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| a. firm | attends to |
| b. dominance | pierce |
| c. make inroads into | augmented |
| d. penetrate | upper hand |
| e. milestone | meets |
| f. enhanced | recruit |
| g. addresses | company |
| h. enroll | achievement |
| i. complements | association |
| j. tie-up | muscle in on |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a. a friendly | the highly lucrative US market |
| b. a serious challenge to | the needs of... |
| c. make inroads into | on performance |
| d. a once in a | milestone |
| e. a major | sports, music and technology |
| f. we are able to offer an enhanced | takeover |
| g. truly addresses | with David Beckham |
| h. enroll global youth through | Nike's dominance |
| i. a focus | portfolio |
| j. Adidas's tie-up | lifetime opportunity |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

SYNONYM FILL: Place the number of the synonym group in the correct gap (It is not important to guess a correct word - any of the synonyms from each group could be put into the relevant gap).

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Reebok CEO Paul Fireman considered Adidas as a perfect partner. He said: "With Adidas, we are able to offer an ____ portfolio of global brands that truly addresses the needs of today's and tomorrow's consumers...Reebok's ____ is to enroll global youth through sports, music and technology. This complements Adidas's mission to be the ____ sports brand in the world with a focus on performance and international presence." The two companies are expected to sign up famous international stars to elevate their products. Adidas's ____ with David Beckham has greatly enhanced the company's worldwide profile

1

enhanced
augmented
improved
reinforced

2

once in a lifetime
once in a blue moon
rare
infrequent

3

milestone
achievement
landmark
event

4

leading
foremost
numero uno
pre-eminent

5

tie-up
association
hookup
banding together

6

mission
task
aim
goal

7

constitutes
makes up
comprises
forms

8

friendly
affable
amicable
civil

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words **'take'** and **'over'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. SYNONYM FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the synonym fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "GLOBAL BRANDS" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about global brands, sportswear and fashion.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| • rival | • enhanced |
| • dominance | • addresses |
| • lucrative | • enroll |
| • penetrate | • mission |
| • combine | • presence |
| • milestone | • elevate |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What were your initial thoughts on this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. Are you interested in fashion or sportswear news?
- d. What do you think of Adidas and Reebok products?
- e. Which sports goods maker is the best and why?
- f. How important is fashion to you?
- g. How long do you think sportswear will be in fashion?
- h. What company's products do you buy to actually play sports?
- i. Do you think Adidas will be able to challenge Nike?
- j. Do you think Adidas needs a slogan similar to Nike's "Just do it"?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What did you think about what you read?
- c. What do you think the two companies have to gain from the takeover?
- d. What are "the needs of today's and tomorrow's consumers"?
- e. What are your needs as a consumer?
- f. Do you think people spend too much money on fashion?
- g. Do you think there is a strong link between sports, music and technology?
- h. What do you think of David Beckham?
- i. Which international star would be best to promote Adidas's products?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

ADIDAS DOMINATION: You are a marketing executive for Adidas. In pairs / groups, discuss your plans to make Adidas the leading sports brand in the world. Discuss the possible problems of your plans and think of solutions to overcome them.

	YOUR IDEA	PROBLEMS	SOLUTIONS
Timeline to be number one			
Slogan			
Superstar to promote products			
First new product			
People to target			
New markets			
Mystery product			

Change partners and share and compare your ideas. Give each other feedback on your ideas.

Return to your original partners. Discuss the feedback you received and any revisions that need implementing.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

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Reebok CEO Paul Fireman _____ Adidas as a perfect partner. He said: "With Adidas, we are able to offer an _____ portfolio of global brands that truly _____ the needs of today's and tomorrow's consumers....Reebok's mission is to enroll global youth through sports, music and technology. This _____ Adidas's mission to be the leading sports brand in the world with a focus on performance and international _____." The two companies are expected to sign up famous international stars to _____ their products. Adidas's _____ with David Beckham has greatly enhanced the company's worldwide profile.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on Adidas and Reebok. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. MY WARDROBE: Make a poster about the last five items of clothing you bought. Explain what you bought and your reasons for buying the clothes. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all buy similar things?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to the CEO of Adidas about the takeover of Reebok. Explain what kinds of products you want Adidas to produce in the future. Read your letter to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. T b. T c. F d. F e. F f. T g. F h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. firm	company
b. dominance	upper hand
c. make inroads into	muscle in on
d. penetrate	pierce
e. milestone	achievement
f. enhanced	augmented
g. addresses	attends to
h. enroll	recruit
i. complements	meets
j. tie-up	association

PHRASE MATCH:

a. a friendly	takeover
b. a serious challenge to	Nike's dominance
c. make inroads into	the highly lucrative US market
d. a once in a	lifetime opportunity
e. a major	milestone
f. we are able to offer an enhanced	portfolio
g. truly addresses	the needs of...
h. enroll global youth through	sports, music and technology
i. a focus	on performance
j. Adidas's tie-up	with David Beckham

SYNONYM FILL:

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