

Baden Sports Social Media Audit

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Introduction

To get a sense for the presence of Baden Sports on social media, I performed a social media audit. I was able to identify which platforms Baden Sports is active on and its strategies for each platform. The company has an active Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube account. While Instagram, Twitter and Facebook don't seem to have very differentiated strategies, YouTube definitely has a distinct purpose for the brand. For each of these platforms, this report will outline the general details of each account, the most successful posts, the most recent posts and some of the influencers or accounts that have posted content for Baden. The report will also go into how the brand may not be getting the most out of its social media accounts and there will be recommendations for what Baden should do to improve its online presence.

In this report, I will also touch on the two athletes that I have decided to feature as part of this project. One is the Linfield Women's Basketball point guard, Ella Koebelin and the other is a forward on the team as well, Peyton Bergevin. Both athletes have grown up using Baden basketballs, which is why I chose to feature them. I chose to film Ella during a workout to create an example for what Baden could post for an Instagram reel and also for a TikTok once Baden creates an account. I then chose to take photos of Peyton using the ball during a workout. I am by no means a professional photographer, but I thought that this element would be a good way to show how Baden could better feature the actual ball for its social media accounts. I used a variety of angles to show creative ideas for how to feature the brand. Along with these photos, I also conducted a short interview with Peyton about the aspects she likes about the Baden basketballs and this could be used on the website so that people can listen to her thoughts before buying the product, or it could also be background sound on a photo montage for Instagram. Both examples will be shown and explained.

Instagram

Instagram is Baden's most followed platform with 12.2k followers. This most likely means that the target market for Baden is mainly younger, since the majority of Instagram users are Millennials or Gen Z. This makes sense, because Baden is a newer company compared to its competitors, founded in 1979. The athletes that it targets are middle school to high school age, as

it is the official ball of the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association and offers customization options to its balls and equipment. For these reasons, Baden needs to be posting most frequently on this platform.

Right now, the best way to describe Baden's Instagram content is that it's inconsistent. While it is more frequent than other platforms, Baden posted five times in August 2022, twice in September 2022 and its latest post was February 14th of this year. Even though its last two posts were far apart, it was at least focusing on basketball, which is usually in season around late September and February when it was posted. However, earlier in the month of September, Baden posted about a backyard Jenga game, which perhaps should have been focused on more in the summertime. That being said, Baden's current link in its bio takes the user directly to its website where customers can buy a pickleball set. This is useful because springtime would make sense for customers to start to think about wanting to purchase outdoor sports equipment or games. However, there haven't been any posts or stories on Baden's account about a pickleball set being available, so customers may not realize that the link is even there. This is just another reason why cohesiveness and consistency on a social media platform is essential, especially when it is the company's most followed platform.

Even though Baden may not necessarily receive as many likes on reels that it posts, it does generate quite a few views which means that it is at least generating impressions of its products from its reels. From what it has posted so far, it seems like the reels that consistently generate more views are the basketball reels. These usually feature players introducing themselves and going through a workout with the basketball. This makes sense because Baden was originally known for its basketballs when it was first founded, since it was the first to invent the women's size basketball. While this strategy is effective for basketball, its other sports equipment that it sells could also be featured in more reels to diversify the content being posted.

Another aspect that is effective about Baden's use of its Instagram is that other people have promoted its equipment for them. For example, there is a well known sports photography group in the Seattle area named, "Sniper Media Group" (@sniperkwam). It has done several photoshoots with club basketball teams and players on those teams. While these photos are featured on the sniperkwam Instagram, evidence of these photos are not found on Baden's Instagram. Baden would not necessarily have to repost these exact photos, but perhaps including them on its Instagram story and choosing a favorite photo to post on its page would be a

successful strategy. That being said, Baden has many “tagged” posts, which at least shows that people in the sports community recognize the brand, but it also shows that the company itself isn’t posting as much of its own original content. its branded hashtag, #badensports, also takes the customer to user-generated content that people have posted using Baden equipment, which is an effective strategy that builds awareness and credibility.

Baden’s most successful posts have clearly featured its basketballs as the center of attention on the post. For example, its post with the most likes is actually a simple photo of a Baden basketball with the Athletes Unlimited logo. This is a professional female sports organization with basketball, volleyball, lacrosse and softball teams that play in tournaments year-round. Another popular post featured Baden basketballs being used at Spokane Hoopfest, one of the largest 3v3 tournaments in the country. This evidence seems to point to the idea that customers respond well to Baden collaborating with other organizations.

Instagram Recommendations

The first recommendation that I have seems obvious, but Baden simply needs to be more consistent with posting on this platform consistently. It is its most popular platform, likely because its target market are avid users of the application and also because it seems like people enjoy how it has featured its equipment with actual athletes using it. This is reflected in its [reel](#) with the most likes, featuring a male athlete doing a workout. I actually got a few ideas from this video when recording my own reel/TikTok of Ella doing a workout. Since this type of content has proved to be effective, Baden could try to include a variety of other sports, since it is mainly basketball being used for these. It seems like it would also be a good strategy for Baden to focus on posting the sports that are in season or about to be in season if its focus is to sell its sports equipment. While posts could be focused on in-season sports, there could still be more regular story posts that could feature other products or promotions.

Another recommendation that I have is to include Instagram highlights on the Baden profile. These highlights could include each sport that Baden offers and also well-known athletes that use the product or tag Baden in its posts. The highlight feature helps the brand categorize content that it post, which also helps customers go straight to the content that it wants to see. (Blunt, 2021). In terms of athletes that could be featured, I know that Hailey Van Lith, a popular player in women’s college basketball, trains often with Baden basketballs and her trainer, Jordan

Lawley, has often “shouted out” Baden. Other athletes could replicate this with its trainers to promote Baden further. It’s also popular to do athlete Q&A’s (Blunt, 2021). This builds brand credibility for the customer and gives them an idea about what real athletes think about the brand.

A lot of brands will also implement a strategy called, “cross-platform quote image,” where there is a tweet pasted on top of a photo, such as this example used by [ESPNW](#). Brands will use this tactic to ask questions (if the tweet poses a question) or encourage its audience to comment on posts (Blunt, 2021). Something that Baden needs throughout its social media accounts is more engagement and posts like this will not only drive customers to the Twitter account, but will also cause them to comment on the Instagram post and hopefully share it too. The photos I took of Peyton could be used for this tactic, and it could also use more posts that focus specifically on the product, which is what my goal was for the photos that I took.

Facebook

Facebook is Baden’s second most-followed platform and the content on this platform is slightly less consistent than Instagram. The brand has not seemed to gain a ton of engagement on this platform and this could be because it is not posting as consistently on this platform and it is also formatting the posts the same if not very similarly to its Instagram posts. However, it is still its second most-followed platform, which shows that customers would still be interested to learn about the brand on this platform, it just perhaps aren’t seeing content that is most effective.

There are a couple effective aspects of Baden’s Facebook page. First of all, Facebook is very useful for customer service, as the company’s contact information is listed in the profile. It also links both its main website, [badensports.com](#), and also its softball and baseball bat site, [axebat.com](#). The company’s hours are also listed on the profile page, which is helpful to know when a representative will be available. These aspects allow for customers to easily get in touch with a Baden representative, while also being given the opportunity to check out its diverse product selection.

Another element that is effective about Baden’s Facebook is the ability that customers have to click on something they see in the Facebook “shop” and be able to be taken directly to the page on the Baden website where the customer can buy the specific product. On its profile, there are “Featured” products which display the Elite Game Basketball, one of its most popular

products, autograph softballs, likely because it is softball season in the spring (the time this audit was written), as well as a pickleball set, since it starts to get warmer in the spring as well. These are effective products to show within the “Featured” section because they are all relevant to the specific season that we’re in.

Though Baden does not seem to post very much on this platform, it are mentioned quite frequently by sports teams or organizations that use its sporting goods. On Facebook, if someone “likes” a page, it will also see these mentions and stay updated on the brand that way.

Facebook Recommendations

When it comes to Facebook, many companies assume that the same tactics that it use for its Instagram account will also work for its Facebook account. Looking at a popular sporting goods brand, Nike, is a great example of how there are differences in how it uses each platform. For example, since Facebook isn’t as much of a visual platform as Instagram is, Nike tends to only actually post on that platform when it’s running a big campaign with a very well-known athlete (Cole, 2018). How Baden could emulate this is that instead of posting the same or very similar content on Facebook as it does Instagram, it could only post there when there is a big announcement for its brand. For example, as mentioned earlier, its most popular Instagram post simply announces its partnership with Athletes Unlimited, a pro female sports league. An announcement like this would be perfect for Facebook, but its backyard games [post](#) with a woman jumping over a giant Jenga set may not be the best content.

Nike also has a separate account for each of its sports, which allows customers to get a more catered experience based on the specific sports they’re interested in (Cole, 2018). Baden only seems to have a separate account for Baden Basketball, which makes sense because that is its most well-known sport, but it would be helpful for athletes in different sports to get the same experience.

Another major way that Nike uses Facebook is that it recognizes that many customers go to its account for customer service purposes. This is likely because customers are looking for real-time responses instead of having to deal with a public forum (Cole, 2018). Instead of focusing on posting consistently on this platform, Baden could focus on posting its most important announcements and also making sure that its links to its website and shop are updated to whichever sport is in season. Many customers go to social media first when looking to buy

something, so making sure that the customer can easily get to the website from the Facebook account is essential.

Twitter

Baden's Twitter page, @badensports, also struggles with consistency. Its latest post was from August 2022 and it also has some of the same posts on this platform as it does on others. The one aspect that is different about Twitter is that Baden has the ability to retweet posts that mention them and it will show up on its page. For this reason, it seems like the platform has been more active in the past, however there still has not been a ton of original content on its page. One example is that since Baden sponsors the Harlem Globetrotters, the team's account posted a video of three team members doing tricks and Baden retweeted that post to have it featured on its feed.

Another advantage to Twitter is that Baden created a separate account, @badenhoops, to specifically promote basketball content. However, the content on this account is even more inconsistent, with its last post being April of 2022. This post featured a training video of one of the members of Baden's All-American teams that it started in 2022, while a pinned post at the top of its profile was the same concept with a different player. There were only two other posts about this, one other in April 2022, while the pinned post was from January 2022. It seems like these All-American teams are/were a great opportunity for Baden but they were not heavily advertised and there were only posts about them on Twitter but not on any of its other platforms. While Baden has a huge opportunity here to cater to a more targeted audience of just basketball players, it's not being utilized to the best of its ability.

Twitter Recommendations

The reason why people are on Twitter is much different than the reasons that they are on Facebook or Instagram. On Twitter specifically, users are looking for humorous and authentic content because this can make the brand more recognizable (Spillane, 2022). Instead of simply picking and choosing photos to copy onto its Twitter page, Baden could use the platform to post questions, polls or anything that would get the user to interact with the post. As I mentioned before, these tweets can also be incorporated into a cross-platform post, with the tweet pasted

onto an Instagram photo. An example could be, “What is your favorite feature of Baden basketballs?” which could be incorporated with a photo of an athlete using a basketball.

Another example for a recommendation is when Skittles [tweeted](#) using #NationalBestFriendsDay in its own way (Spillane, 2022). When brands interact with hashtags that are already trending, it becomes part of a current conversation and can often take its own creative, and usually humorous, take on incorporating the trend into its own post. It is also common for Twitter users to search by hashtag, creating a higher chance of Baden content to be seen on the platform.

While Baden often uses media within its tweets, it doesn't often use GIFs, which are an effective way to create a post that is a bit more interesting (Spillane, 2022). GIFs would be pretty easy to create for Baden, with an athlete dribbling a basketball or hitting a baseball. GIFs aren't used as heavily on other platforms, so this would add something fresh to Baden's content.

YouTube

Baden's YouTube account is the least active of its social media. its last post was from over a year ago and its [video](#) with the most likes is from four years ago, featuring Brandon Roy, who is a retired NBA All-Star and was Rookie of the Year and endorses Baden.

On Baden's website, there is a tab for “Baden Stories,” which I feel is very effective in telling the story of the brand and the coach or player's personal connection to the brand. However, these need to be posted more often by the Baden brand, at least once per year, seeing that the last one featuring Brandon Roy was posted four years ago.

It also has several videos advertising a new product that came out such as the [Baden Elektro LED Light Up Basketball](#) or the [soccer ball](#). These videos help the customer get a sense for the product and can better help them decide if they want to buy it or not.

YouTube Recommendations

Even though Baden at least has a YouTube account, my recommendation would be to put more effort into adding a TikTok account instead. This has been recommended to companies who have a younger audience and need to grow more quickly. It is a lot easier to gain exposure faster and (Passaris, 2023). By focusing on TikTok's short-form videos, Baden could get the

word out about its brand much quicker than if it posted a YouTube link and hoped that people clicked on it.

This isn't to say that Baden should never post on YouTube. It is effective to have its longer, "Baden Stories" videos on its account so that people can easily go to its page and view them. At the end of the day, it may come down to if the brand has enough money to pay TikTok influencers, who I will touch on in the next section, and also be able to feature more of these stories on its YouTube.

Recommendation to Start a TikTok Account

Fitness, sports or sporting-related hashtags attract an average of 57 billion TikTok views each month. It's even a statistic that this platform is starting to get the most engagement out of any platform being used for marketing right now (*Why You Should Use TikTok to Promote Your Sports Brand*, n.d.). For this reason alone, there is no reason why Baden shouldn't create a presence on this platform. Additionally, TikTok is popular with a Gen Z audience, many of which fit Baden's target market of high school athletes. Many Baden customers are likely already using the app and it would be more likely to interact with Baden content on TikTok.

This app is also highly successful with engagement when influencers are involved (*Why You Should Use TikTok to Promote Your Sports Brand*, n.d.). Many popular college and professional athletes have NIL deals with certain brands. If Baden has the money in its budget to pay an influencer to be featured in TikToks with Baden products, or even on other forms of social media, the posts will have a much higher level of engagement. Additionally, "trick shot" influencers are also very popular on the app (*Why You Should Use TikTok to Promote Your Sports Brand*, n.d.). Baden could utilize this tactic by having a well-known trick shot influencer use a Baden product while attempting its trick shot.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the main point of feedback that I have for the Baden brand is that its social media accounts do not consistently have content posted on them. Also, it doesn't seem to have a clear strategy of which posts are featured on which platform or have a variety of content across platforms. Each platform has a specific use that works best for it, and at the moment, Baden is

not using each platform to its strength. Additionally, the brand needs to add a TikTok account because the application is widely popular with the target market and is able to drive engagement quickly with interesting, short-form videos. I have also reflected on what has worked for Baden and what it needs to keep doing more of. This includes posting more videos of athletes working out with the equipment, mainly on Instagram reels and then on TikTok once that is set up. Main recommendations include adding Instagram highlights, posting more workout videos with athletes (as reels or TikToks), using the cross-platform technique, only posting big campaign announcements on Facebook, making Twitter more humorous and conversational, and prioritizing TikTok over YouTube for the time being to grow the brand.

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