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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

German sports goods company Adidas has bought its rival Reebok in a friendly takeover for \$3.8 billion. The new company hopes to challenge Nike's dominance in the sportswear world. Adidas wants to increase its share of the big-money US market. Adidas will also attempt to increase Reebok's sales in Europe. 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."

Reebok CEO Paul Fireman said Adidas was a perfect partner. He looked forward to creating newer and more exciting products for "today's and tomorrow's consumers". He said: "Reebok's mission is to enroll global youth through sports, music and technology." Adidas's mission is to be the leading sports brand in the world. The two companies are expected to sign up famous international stars to make their products better known. Adidas's tie-up with David Beckham has greatly improved 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 in the past. Which are the your favorite 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 / takeovers / perfect partners / today’s and tomorrow’s consumers / music / technology / 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. The new company hopes to challenge Nike. | T / F |
| c. Reebok hopes to focus on sales in Africa. | T / F |
| d. The Adidas CEO said such takeovers happened every year or so. | 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 tie-up with David Beckham has been a disaster. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| a. company | ideal |
| b. rival | goal |
| c. share | try |
| d. attempt | customers |
| e. combine | competitor |
| f. perfect | attract |
| g. consumers | firm |
| h. enroll | merge |
| i. mission | association |
| j. tie-up | percentage |

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

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. sports | market |
| b. a friendly | more exciting products |
| c. challenge Nike's dominance | the world |
| d. the big-money US | takeover |
| e. a once-in-a-lifetime | worldwide profile |
| f. creating newer and | famous international stars |
| g. enroll global youth through | goods company |
| h. the leading sports brand in | sports, music and technology |
| i. sign up | opportunity |
| j. greatly improved the company's | in the sportswear world |

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 said Adidas was a perfect partner. He looked forward to ____ newer and more exciting products for "today's and tomorrow's consumers". He said: "Reebok's ____ is to enroll global youth through sports, music and technology." Adidas's mission is to be the ____ sports brand in the world. The two companies are expected to sign up famous international stars to make their products better known. Adidas's ____ with David Beckham has greatly improved the company's worldwide profile.

1

rival
competitor
opposite
adversary

2

once in a lifetime
once in a blue moon
rare
infrequent

3

creating
developing
making
producing

4

leading
foremost
number one
numero uno

5

tie-up
association
hookup
banding together

6

mission
goal
aim
task

7

attempt
try
effort
endeavor

8

share
percentage
portion
slice

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 | • perfect |
| • dominance | • tomorrow's |
| • big-money | • youth |
| • Europe | • leading |
| • opportunity | • famous |
| • industry | • profile |

DISCUSSION

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

- a. What did you think when you first saw 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 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 will 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 AS #1: 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 answers to those problems.

	YOUR IDEA	PROBLEMS	ANSWERS
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 got and decide what you need to do to make your plan better.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Adidas agrees to buy rival Reebok

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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. company	firm
b. rival	competitor
c. share	percentage
d. attempt	try
e. combine	merge
f. perfect	ideal
g. consumers	customers
h. enroll	attract
i. mission	goal
j. tie-up	association

PHRASE MATCH:

a. sports	goods company
b. a friendly	takeover
c. challenge Nike's dominance	in the sportswear world
d. the big-money US	market
e. a once-in-a-lifetime	opportunity
f. creating newer and	more exciting products
g. enroll global youth through	sports, music and technology
h. the leading sports brand in	the world
i. sign up	famous international stars
j. greatly improved the company's	worldwide profile

SYNONYM FILL:

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