

I am going to lean into the fact that I am more likely to wear boots for a hike in the woods than sneakers to run faster, jump higher or do anything more athletic than ride a bicycle. I am sure you know more about this company than I do, so take my outsider's perspective for whatever's useful.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS:

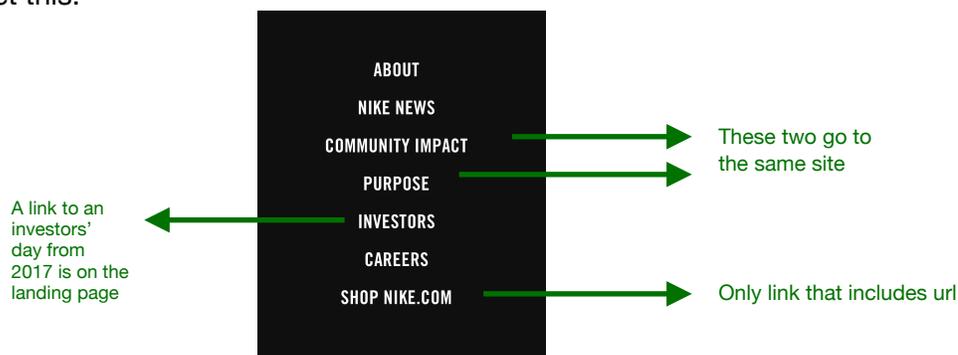
I spent time surfing the family of corporate sites:

- about.nike.com
- purpose.nike.com
- jobs.nike.com
- news.nike.com
- investors.nike.com

If that isn't enough of a tangle, there is some overlap with the **consumer sales site, nike.com**, via **podcasts**. Except it's even more of a tangle, because to find the podcasts requires a scroll down on a page for "Nike apps" (Peloton-ish work-out programs) that you cannot directly access from nike.com: <https://www.nike.com/ntc-app>

I found the page by Googling "Nike sports services." Sports services were mentioned in the RFP I didn't know what those were. In addition to training apps, there are also links to **training articles**.

Adding to the confusion, if you click on the three bars on the news.nike.com site for navigation, you get this:



And, predictably, while you can access site from news.nike.com, it's a **one-way navigation**. There is no navigation from the other sites back to *Nike News*.

This is **content kudzu** with stray facts sprouting everywhere. It is clear no one has really been in charge, which, of course, is why there is an RFP.

The content is generally interesting, but with the exception of the training podcasts and articles (which are *not* part the RFP brief mix) they read more like press releases whose primary purpose is corporate promotion. There is a lack of clarity, urgency and point.

I would love to know more about their readers: Who are their readers? Do readers access this content mostly through links on social media, or do they visit he websites? What are the share stats? What readers would they like to have? What is the point of creating all this content? Does it drive sales? Or is this more about telling the company story for shareholders, executives and the employees? I suspect it's the latter.

What are the editorial guidelines that help shape a "Nike News" story. What happens to the archives? (**always** a rich trove, typically overlooked).

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There are stories on sustainability, diversity, communities, new shoe launches, etc, but each is treated as its own separate, stand-alone rather than part of a whole. For the reader, or at least this reader, it all feels kind of random.

There is no clear, overarching editorial point of view, which is not surprising. I counted **a dozen "stakeholders" on the RFP list** (bio's in the People section). All but one is listed as "Comms." There are plenty of VPs and various versions of Senior Director, but not a single Editor in the bunch. The few who studied journalism in college focused on "corporate communications." They are very, very good at writing press releases and aligning message with corporate purpose, but aren't as experienced at taking a step back to see the greater whole.

That said, the **editorial possibilities are interesting, fun, playful and plentiful**. For example:

- For the focus on shoes, there are few (any?) stories on feet and physiology.
- For for all the emphasis on bringing “inspiration and innovation to every athlete,” there are few (any?) then/now stories. (e.g., 1971 when Blue Ribbon Shoes became Nike, the fastest mile by a man was 3.56.4. In 2019 it was 3.47.01. For women: 1971: 4.35.3 versus 2019 4:12:33. Shoes Nikes—played a big role in the speedier speeds. That’s a story.)
- For all the talk about sustainability, there is almost nothing Nike’s impressive global real estate portfolio. Much (all) is run on renewables, but I suspect there are also stories on green building materials and environmentally progressive landscaping. From interior lighting to rooftop gardens, I could probably riff a book on this...

More on in the “What if?” Section.

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This quick surf also turned up a pattern of **three-word mission-y statements**:

Innovation, Growth, Purpose

People, Planet, Purpose

People, Planet, Play

Mission, Values, Strategy

OVERVIEW

The Nike story really is amazing: from selling shoes out of the back of a car and paying a designer \$2 per hour to come up with a logo to a global presence with ~76,000 employees, mind-boggling supply chains, and \$37.4 billion in revenue for FY2020. That’s roughly three times that of its nearest shoe rival, Adidas.

As the company has expanded into apparel, equipment, accessories and services, it now has competitors in all of these categories, so its **dominance is actually more nuanced**. <https://bstrategyhub.com/top-nike-competitors-alternatives/>. Losing Simone Biles to Athleta is case in point. She wanted a platform where she could be a star and not lost in a stable of stars. <https://www.etonline.com/simone-biles-leaves-nike-to-partner-with-athleta-164736>

Although **Nike stock has been on a remarkable 50-year rally** (with little dips along the way), they have next dragons coming at them from every quarter. It isn't only sector competition, but also critics that have taken aim over factory conditions and environmental footprint. The company has made significant efforts on both fronts in recent years.

Growth of this breadth, depth and speed inevitably leads to a complexity that can tip toward complication. **There actually is a compelling, internal need for Nike News**. It is easy to lose the narrative in such a sprawling story. But as *Nike News* is currently configured, its muddleness adds complication.

I am guessing that you probably know about the **company's history** than I do, so rather than a bad retelling, here's a link for a refresher if needed: <https://www.thestreet.com/lifestyle/history-of-nike-15057083>

Also, I came across a **new book published by Phaidon, Nike: Better is Temporary**, that looks like maybe it should be in your library: <https://www.creativereview.co.uk/storytelling-nike-brand/> & https://www.phaidon.com/store/design/nike-better-is-temporary-9781838660512/?gclid=EAlalQobChMI99bmjbSh8AIVgG1vBB2xpwLvEAAYASAAEgJyXPD_BwE

PEOPLE

(Referred to in the RFP as "Stakeholders | Working Group)

COMMS: CORPORATE NARRATIVE

- **Sara Blasing, VP Corporate Narrative Communications**: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/sara-blasing/> She's been with Nike for almost 8 years ,working her way up through the communications depart. She's has only been in her current role for 7 months. Before than

she was Head of Global Communications and Social Impact, Jordan Brand for almost two years.

- **Nicholas Shonberger, Senior Director Corporate Narrative Communications** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/nick-schonberger-0900aa13/>. He was on the original call and has been with Nike for about six years. He, too, is comparatively new to his role — 5 months. His previous position was Global Editorial Communications Director. Before than he was with **Sang Bleu** (<https://sangbleu.com>). He has a Master's in Material Culture from the University of Delaware and a Bachelor's in Art History from UW Madison. He contributed to a **book on Nike Icons**: https://www.amazon.com/Virgil-AblohTM-Somethings-Taschen-Whites/dp/B08TV7WW51/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&qid=1619556791&refinements=p_27%3ANicholas+Schonberger&s=books&sr=1-1
- **Chris Nelson, Creative Director / Interactive Designer** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/chrisnels0n/> He's has this job for 12 years - from the beginning of [news.Nike.com](https://news.nike.com) (which apparently launched in late 2011) Since 2019 he has also had a side gig as the owner of **Dekum Guitar** company, making custom electric guitars and bases. <https://www.dekumguitar.com> He's also designed snow boards. He has a BS in Fine Arts from the University of Oregon

COMMS: ENTERPRISE

- **KeJuan Wilkins, VP Global Enterprise Communications** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/kejuan-wilkins-46476a5/> He is based in NY and has been with Nike for 15 years. He, too, is relatively new to his latest post— 8 months. His previous job was VP North America Communications. He was the Public Relations manager for the NY Knicks and has a Bachelor's in Sports Management from the University of Michigan.
- **Anna Kim-Williams, Senior Director of Global Corporate Communications** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/annakimwilliams/>. She's been with Nike for about 2.5 yers. Before that she did PR for Samsung Mobile for three years, and before that she was with Microsoft and Starbucks.
- **Sean Parker, Global Senior Director, Finance + Strategy Communications** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/seantparker/> Based in Cincinnati. He is new the company - been in this

position for only four months. Before that he worked for three big Cincy-based companies: P&G, Fifth Third Bank, and Kroger, all in theme and variation of corporate communications. Odd fact, he went to the same high school as my cousins.

- **Anne-miek Hameinck, Global Senior Director, HR Communications** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ahamelinck/>. She has been with Nike a little less than two years. Before that she worked at several PR / Communications first for twenty years, working with a range of brands (Sun Microsystems to Mercedes Benz), doing things like managing “influencer campaigns” and “executive coaching.” Based in a Pleasant Hill, CA, a suburb of SF.
- **Kristen Gefre aka “Bitter”** - unclear whether she took a married name or reverted to a pre-married name. She is not on LinkedIn as far as I can tell and her tweets are protected. I found a news story about the firing of a couple of long-term Nike store employees where she is referred to as a “spokesman” <https://www.wivb.com/news/local-news/nike-employees-claim-unfair-termination-after-shoplifting-incident/> So basically I think she does PR, high enough and low enough on the totem pole to get the crappy job of being spokesman.
- **Micah Dunham, Creative Director, Global Communications** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/micahdunham/> He’s been with Nike for 9 years in various design positions. Before that he spent about a decade working his way up from media relations for sports teams to graphic design, starting with CBS College Sports, then a few design companies.

COMMS: PURPOSE

- **Virginia Rustique-Petteni, VP Purpose Communications** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/virginia-rustique-petteni-9b1416a8/>. She has been with Nike about 3.5 years, but in her current position only 7 months. Prior to that she worked in London for 17 years in London, first in political roles (special advisor for nominations, White House Office of Legislative Affairs; special advisor to US ambassador), then in good works corporate relations (Bloomberg, NIKE Foundation, Girl Effect). Has a Bachelor’s in history from University of Chicago.
- **Devon Scott, Director, Purpose Strategic Initiatives** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/devon-scott-32018762/>. She has been working at Nike since she was in college getting a Bachelor’s in Environmental Economics and Politics at Scripps in 2006. She spent three years as a sales, shipping and receiving associate before moving over to corporate. Over the last 9

years she worked her way up through 6 jobs, while earning an MBA at the University of Oregon.

EXTENDED

- **Scott Mayo, Global Talent Attraction, Engagement and Experience** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/scott-mayo-5379024/>. Has a degree in Economics from NYU, but sport has been his passion. He began his career as a new business development analyst for the New England Patriots in 2005, then moved on to work in recruiting for the NBA, spent 7 months the manager for talent acquisition for Ralph Lauren, then went right back to the NBA for another nearly 4 years, Then Nike since 2016. He has been in his current position for only 4 months.

WHAT IF?

As I was listening to the call yesterday, I began to think about a project my good friend, photographer Mickey Pallas, worked on for years during the 1960s for Standard Oil. (*Lee: My m.o. has two guiding principles: 1) say yes unless there's a good reason to say no. 2) if a door isn't locked, by all means go through it. Among the many things I've said yes to has been curating some big exhibits, including a retrospective of Mickey's work. More here: <https://www.jaginsburg.com/mickey-pallas.html>*)

Mickey and a writer-friend came up with idea of "Standardland," which was basically as far as you could get in a car. The two of them, thick as thieves, came up with field trip after field trip for story after story for "Torch" magazine, a corporate publication modeled on LIFE. Between "Torch" and his steady gig with the Harlem Globetrotters—which took him to Europe—Mick has some of the best bread-and-butter clients ever...

Anyway, I began thinking about how I would translate the Nike News site into a print publication to better visualize structure, to then be turned back into a version better suited for digital.

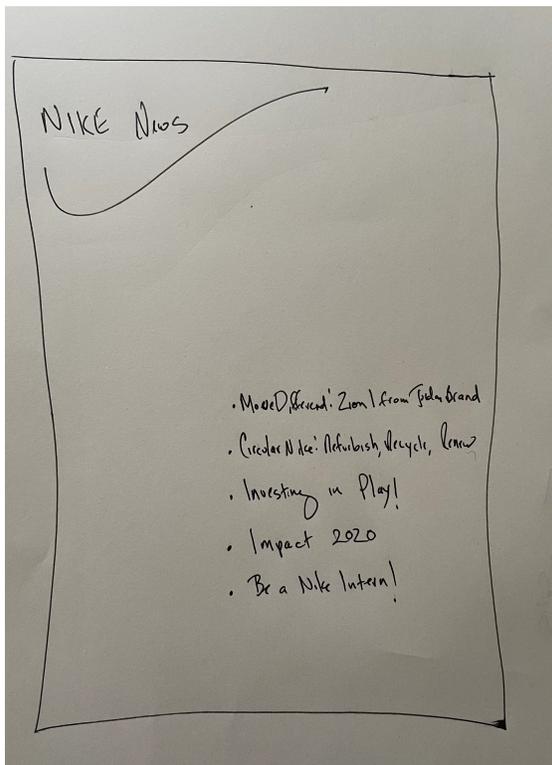
Then I began thinking that the digital version needed to be more like a digital magazine: *The Atlantic*, *New Yorker*, *New York Magazine*, etc. They have figured how to make editorial content

look editorial and not like a blog. They have figured out the best typefaces for screens and how to make it work on phones, tablets and laptops. They have figure out how to add photographs, info-graphics, videos (NYT is constantly trying to outdo itself with graphic storytelling).

Then I began thinking that if it made sense, the content could actually be reformatted for print distribution as well, perhaps as a semi-annual magazine.

So...

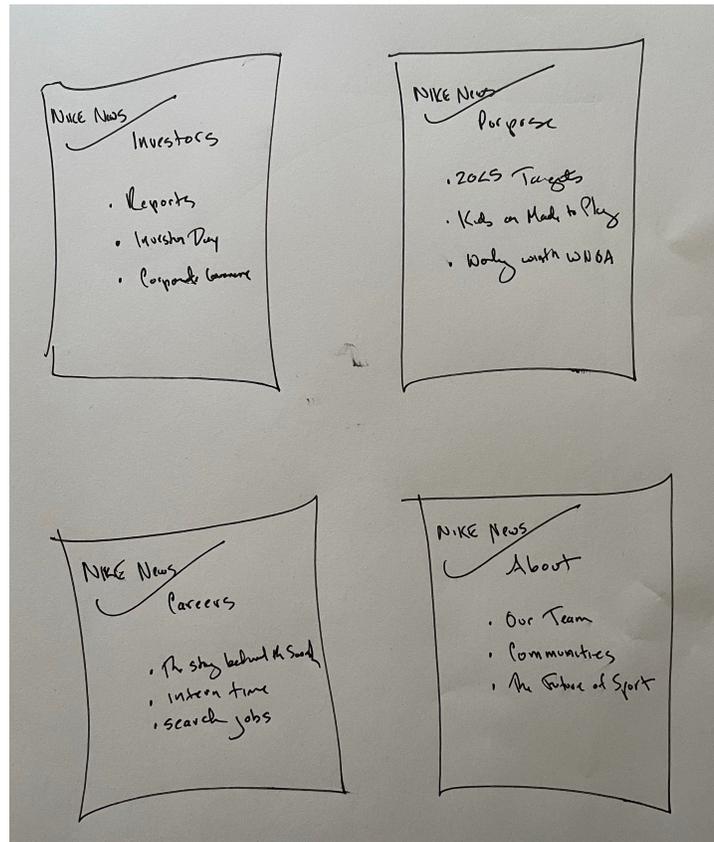
I began sketching. My drafting / sketching skills hit a low bar, so apologies. If they convey the general idea, they will have done their job.



Each of the pull out articles is from a different corporate site — they are actual articles.

Although this is mock-up for a print magazine, the structure is what I'm really trying to illustrate.

Each corporate site is a section of **NIKE News**, organized in along similar lines.



This is very rough sketch, but shows how content can be organized so that it's unified.

As I dug into the Investors, Careers, About and Purpose pages, I discovered that several had their own variations on navigation, typically buried in footers. Under Investors, there's a Supply Chain page, for example. Most of the content is good, but buried, buried, buried.

Any questions?

- Janet