



# Wieden Kennedy<sup>+</sup>

---

Alexis Huynh, Alyssa Zucker,  
Angela Whiteley, Leslie Ortega,  
Ryan Tanoury, Sam Chen,  
Sarah Clark Ballard

## **Problem Statement**

Founded in 1985 by two devoted sports-fishermen, Costa Del Mar offers premium-priced sport sunglasses to anglers and water enthusiasts. For the last 33 years, Costa has targeted men between mid-20s and late 50s. To achieve mainstream growth, Costa now aims to establish ties among a new target market without alienating their core audience and sacrificing authenticity.

## **Critical Factors**

1. **Brand Objective:** Mainstream growth
2. **New Target Market:** There are two distinct groups that Costa believes would be ideal targets for expansion:
  - a. Adventure Travel Aficionados
  - b. College Students (particularly male Greek-life students)
3. **Current Target Market:** Costa's core audience is men, from mid-20s to late 50s, with an intense love for fishing and adventure. They are divided into five sub-groups and ranked by priority with varying personalities and needs:
  - a. The Hard-Core
  - b. Deep-Sea Sport Fishermen
  - c. Technical Anglers
  - d. Ocean Voyagers
  - e. Gen X/Y Anglers
4. **Brand Image Influencers:** There are a number of macro trends that could potentially influence consumers' perception and interest in Costa:
  - a. **People think fishing is boring-** It might be difficult for mainstream consumers to associate a fishing sunglasses brand with interesting and epic adventures.
  - b. **The culture is experiencing "big fish syndrome"-** The rise in popularity of fishing shows, such as Shark Week and Whale World, tend to feature content about large, rare and strange-looking or dangerous fish.
  - c. **Adventure travel is accessible-** The larger public has grown interested in the idea of adventure travel. Previously inaccessible places, like Cuba and El Salvador, have become popular tourist attractions. The Internet provides information about foreign lands, while TV shows from Andrew Zimmerman, Anthony Bourdain, and The Travel Channel have drawn mass attention and interest in adventure travel.
5. **Competitors:** Costa is on par with Maui Jim sunglasses in terms of protection and performance, but consumers (Ocean Voyagers) believe that Maui Jim's simple style is superior.
6. **Competitive Advantage:** Costa sunglasses have a unique technology that protects wearers from the harsh, inhospitable sun and filters out glare found on the ocean. They also allow wearers to see clusters of baitfish beneath the ocean surface glare and diving birds on the horizon. With saltwater fishing in mind, the glasses fit snugly to protect against ocean spray and have lenses that are scratch and rust resistant, polarized and 100% UV A/B protected for eye safety and comfort.
7. **Credibility:** Costa was founded by passionate and devoted sport-fishermen with a desire for eye gear that can handle anything nature has to offer.

8. **Advertising/Marketing Efforts:** In terms of marketing and communication, Costa currently uses three brand tenets to connect the brand to its adventure angler audience:
  - a. **Adventure Advocate-** Costa encourages people to get outside and into uncharted territories to find great stories. Costas are an essential part of preparation for the unpredictable journey.
  - b. **Unfair Advantage-** Costa's 580 lenses offer an unfair technical advantage. The lenses reduce the intensity of yellow light, which is found at 580 nanometers on the light spectrum and tires and dries eyes quickly. The 580 lenses kill glare and enhance contrast for breathtakingly clear vision.
  - c. **Higher Calling-** Costa donates funds and reports on important issues with a goal to educate and empower people to save our world's most important resources.
9. **Budget:** The budget has not yet been determined.

### **Secondary Research**

The first prospective target market, Adventure Travel Aficionados, are members of Generation X. People within this category value environmental sustainability and take active efforts to protect the environment.<sup>1</sup> Given this information, this target will likely invest in Costa's products because of the brand's dedication to sustainability.

This subgroup within Generation X is an ideal target for Costa, as they have adequate spending power and an interest in outdoor travel and exploration. This target market enjoys experiencing other cultures and pushing their own limits much like Costa's current core audience. Therefore, they value dependable gear and accessories that help them pursue an active lifestyle.<sup>2</sup> Because this older market seeks quality over exclusivity, marketing to this group should stress the durability and technical advantages of Costa products.

The second prospective target market, male fraternity members, are classified into the millennial generation. Millennials are more inclined to support local businesses and efforts that aim to reduce environmental risks and ecological scarcities.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, millennials will likely support Costa's environmental initiatives by supporting the brand itself.

Compared to older generations, young affluent males are more willing to invest in higher-end items of clothings and accessories.<sup>4</sup> Because fraternity members attend many social functions, they place a higher priority on their appearance and have a greater need to expand their wardrobe. Further, the young men in this group often replicate the fashion choices of their fraternity brothers and adapt to stay on trend. In a 2018 Mintel study on school shopping, 59% of

---

1

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/josephcoughlin/2018/05/05/greener-than-you-boomers-gen-x-millennials-score-themselves-on-the-environment/#489f950b4d8b>

2 <https://skift.com/2017/10/02/u-s-millennials-travel-the-most-but-gen-z-is-on-the-rise/>

3

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescommunicationscouncil/2018/03/15/understanding-how-millennials-respond-to-your-marketing-efforts/#4346877070cd>

4 <http://academic.mintel.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/display/889669/>

college men ages 18-23 said their purchases are most influenced by peer recommendations.<sup>5</sup> This information suggests that traditional advertising will not affect the purchasing behavior of this target. Alternatively, marketing efforts should seek to foster relationships through events and popularize Costa's preppy style through social media and brand image influencers.

### **Primary Research**

After looking at the secondary research, we decided to send out a survey asking relevant questions about sunglasses preferences as well as fishing and traveling habits. Overall, the survey had a sample size of 190 respondents. After distributing the survey, we decided to filter out the responses and look at the two different targets Costa has been considering: the fraternity students and the adventure travel aficionados. Because Costa believes these two markets could be key groups to target, looking deeper into these markets and their responses is crucial.

First, we looked at the responses from males, ages 18-24, who went (or go) to college in one of the eight identified states, and are a member of Greek life (n=31). After looking at this data, a few observations specifically stood out. First, this is a target market that fishes regularly. From our data, we saw that 61.29% answered "yes" when asked if they fished. Because this is such a large proportion, this target may be more inclined to buy a pair of Costa glasses, as the brand is known for having high quality to perform better while fishing. Secondly, when asked what they look for in sunglasses, the majority of respondents (58%) said that "style" was the most important characteristic, while 26% chose "quality" and 16% chose "price." Clearly, this target will consider style when making a sunglasses purchase. When asked about cost, the largest percentage of respondents (29%) said they were willing to spend up to \$150 on sunglasses. While this value is relatively high, this is about the starting price of most Costa sunglasses, indicating that price could be a negative factor for this group. In addition, 51% of respondents said they would be willing to buy a new pair of sunglasses every few years. Given this information, we can infer that this sample will want to buy a pair of glasses that are capable of withstanding years of wear and tear. Lastly, this survey revealed the brand preferences of this target. When asked to name their favorite sunglasses brand, 45% answered Ray-Bans. We have clearly identified another competitor for Costa that may not have been originally considered due to the fact that Ray-Ban is not known for their excellent quality when it comes to fishing and other outdoor activities.

Next, we took a look at the adventure travel aficionado data. This sample (n=71) included male and female adults, ages 35+, who travel at least four times per year. This target market loves to travel and seeks adventure. Over 67% of respondents said that they travel more than five times per year, and 38% said they travel to a beach or lake at least once a month. Their frequent water adventures indicate a potential need for high quality glasses to have during their trips. Similar to the alternative target, this group prioritizes style and quality over price when purchasing sunglasses. In fact, 31% of respondents said they are willing to spend over \$250 on a single pair, which demonstrates a willingness to invest in Costa's quality lenses. However, this target seems to also be interested in higher-end designer brands. When asked to name their favorite sunglasses brand, many respondents stated brands such as Gucci, Tom Ford and Prada. To compete with these competitors, Costa must show how their glasses offer quality without sacrificing style. Lastly, out of all of the respondents who identified Costa as their favorite

---

<sup>5</sup> <http://academic.mintel.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/display/877447/>

sunglasses brand, 75% are women. This shows that marketing efforts should target both women and men within this group.

In addition to creating a survey, we also conducted in-depth interviews with sales staff at Tyler's on Guadalupe and Whole Earth on North Lamar. We chose these two locations because of their status as verified Costa distributors and their relative proximity to the University of Texas campus. Both of these locations confirmed that the primary Costa consumer group is older men, as well as women who purchase Costas for their husbands. We found that younger males were more drawn to Ray-Bans and Oakleys, while older males would compare Costas to Maui Jims (an even more expensive brand). This is because Costas are high in price, and most customers that purchase Costas have the spending power to do so. The interviews revealed that the main reasons for purchasing Costas are because of their polarized lenses and for outdoor activities, including fishing trips.

### **Alternative One - Adventure Travel Aficionados**

Our first alternative focuses on men and women in their late 30s to 50s that are further along in life. These consumers have disposable income with a desire to travel to new and foreign lands. They enjoy experiencing other cultures while testing their own limits. To them, Costa is more than a brand, but a representation of their lifestyle. These travel aficionados have a broad range of life experience to go along with Costa's brand authenticity.

When adventuring, experienced travelers bring and maintain essentials on their journeys that they can count on during their adventures. Costa has generated a strong following among them and is a top manufacturer of high-quality sunglasses. To this target market, having the proper equipment is not only about practicality, but also about style, which Costa is able to provide. Style is important with sunglasses and travelers don't want to sacrifice it in order to gain functionality. Having one pair of functional, dependable sunglasses for times of deep sea fishing and everyday use brings ease to travelers when having to pack light.

While Costa will still maintain their focus on fishing and the angler lifestyle, slice of life advertising is an additional key component. This includes people on sunny vacations and fishing adventures wearing Costa sunglasses to demonstrate its versatility and durability.

#### **Pros:**

- Target audience has sufficient income (2)
- Traveler lifestyle matches the brand image and culture (2,3)
- Ad campaign supported by a large budget (9)
- Costa has unique technology that protects wearers from the harsh, inhospitable sun and glare (6)
- Costa's credibility is high, they practically sell themselves through word of mouth and brand identity (6,7)

#### **Cons:**

- Costa has a high price tag and might not want to spend that much if used for just one trip (5)
- Many competitors such as Gucci, Tom Ford, Oakley, and Prada (5)
- Costa is known for fishing and it can be hard to break away from fishing, may alienate anglers (7)

- Costa has a strong following and targeting toward different people may anger the anglers (2,3,8)
- It is difficult to target all kinds of adventure travelers (2,3,8)

### **Alternative Two - College Students**

Our second alternative for Costa focuses on targeting male college greek-life students in southern states. These students appreciate Costa's "preppy cool" look and have adopted the brand as part of their "uniform." Male greek-life students typically travel a lot during college for breaks, road trips and events. Because of this, Costa sunglasses would be a stylish and trendy accessory to have with them on these adventures. Targeting this market would require Costa to change the perspective of their association being only to devoted fishermen. Costa would need to appeal to this market's interest in appearance and trendy accessories by spotlighting their products' stylish designs.

Targeting college students would be more accessible than travel aficionados because they are a more well-defined, homogeneous group that is easier to appeal to through marketing and event sponsorships. Fraternity members tend to purchase items from their friends' recommendations. Therefore, Costa needs to focus on building relationships with colleges across the southern states in order to build a reputation as a trendy brand. By becoming a major presence on college campuses, Costa will transition from a brand known among devoted fishermen to a preppy and popular accessory among fraternity members.

#### **Pros:**

- Fraternity students are an accessible, homogenous group (1,2).
- These students are well-funded and have the financial means to invest in Costa lenses (1).
- The peer influencing power of this group will encourage the adoption of Costa products within Greek communities and associate it beyond just fishing/outdoor activities (1,4,5).
- These students will become walking advertisements for Costa (1,4,5).
- Appealing to this group through social events will aid the brand's mainstream growth (1,5).

#### **Cons:**

- This target market is significantly different than Costa's current audience (2,3,4).
- Marketing to this target through events will be costly (9).
- Students that are already brand loyal to competitors are less likely to invest in making the switch (1,5).
- Widespread adoption of Costa products throughout this target is dependent on the brand's trendiness and less on its user advantages (1,6,7).
- Advertising efforts might not change their perspective of associating Costa sunglasses with devoted fishermen (3,4,7).

## **Conclusion**

Ultimately, the wiser target market to pursue is the Adventure Travel Aficionados. There were many tell-tale signs that made us favor this group. The most important reason is that this market does not alienate Costa's original core audience. Serious sport-fisherman can still fall under the umbrella of adventure travelers, and vice-versa. To quote Mary Kay Ash of Mary Kay Cosmetics, "You gotta dance with the one who brung ya," meaning, that Costa can not lose sight of their loyal following when broadening their target market. While college fraternity students are a well-defined market to tap into, it would ultimately offend the serious sport-fisherman who already support Costa to know that their glasses are now used for a "fraternity uniform."

Our primary research also supported the selection of this market. The survey we conducted led us to believe that the traveler market is more likely to spend more money on sunglasses. The results also showcased that quality is not as important to fraternity college students as it is to this older market. This prioritization of style and quality is what leads the travelers to spend more on these glasses. The interviews we conducted also led us to believe that adventure travel aficionados were the better alternative. Tyler's is a clothing store located immediately across the UT campus, and even their staff said that they do not sell many Costas to college students. Due to the price of these sunglasses, they are much more appropriate for working men and women with established incomes rather than college students who are parent-funded. At Both Tyler's and Whole Earth, the sales staff confirmed our notions that an older demographic typically buys Costas. The sales staff also mentioned that the main reason people buy these glasses is because of their polarized lenses. This is more helpful to those taking part in adventure sports than to those using them as a fashion piece. They also said the glasses are frequently purchased before a trip, which directly points to the Adventure Travel Aficionados.

Costa Del Mar sunglasses are made by serious sport-fisherman. Because of their high quality polarized lenses, they are much more than "cool looking glasses." These glasses can serve integral purposes to fishing, hiking and other adventurous activities. Adventure Travel Aficionados have the money to spend on high quality glasses, and they are much more closely related to the original target market of Anglers, thus making them the obvious choice for Costa Del Mar to target.