

Ads are like shoes



By [Isaac Kwame Adom](#)

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Both have a basic function. For shoes, it's to protect your feet from the elements. For ads, it's to impact audience attitudes towards a brand. Both can leave lasting impressions but, can also be entirely forgettable.



Photo by [Hermes Rivera](#) on [Unsplash](#).

Sure, the depth of your pocket does set parameters. But it doesn't inhibit your ability to leave an impression.

Shoes, like ads, say a lot about the owner (brand) and regardless of intent or best wishes, ultimately, the public judges. Ever stepped out in a pair and thought, "I'm going to kill 'em with this one..." Only for the streets to say, "Nah, fam, that ain't it."?

Ouch, right? A lot of people in advertising can relate. On the flip side, you can step out in a pair of "beaters" and the compliments roll in - all day. We've seen this countless times: low budget ads becoming runaway hits.

What makes a great shoe?

What makes a great shoe? Aesthetics? Yes. But comfort, authenticity and self-confidence reign supreme.

Ever hear people say, “Damn, she can pull off *anything*.” Great ads, like great shoes, are validated by the self-assurance of their owner. They work, even when they really shouldn’t. Trying to fit with the “in crowd” is what’s led to many a poor shoe/ad decision. Just because someone’s pulled it off doesn’t mean you will too.



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Even if you could, who would willingly step out wearing the same kicks as their rival (competitor)? It’s not a good look. *Especially if you’re in the knock-off pair.*

You might get away with it, sure. But when everyone catches on, embarrassed would be putting it mildly.

People that stay true to themselves and wear what they’re comfortable in - regularly and unapologetically - often get to frame ‘the narrative.’ Their shoes become an extension of their personality, if not identity. It allows them to navigate terrain that the wearer would otherwise look out of place in.

If the shoe fits

Think Nike and social justice or Nando’s and political commentary. If the shoe fits, right?

Remember that what a shoe costs and what a shoe is ultimately worth, depends on the impression that they leave with the audience.

Some of the most valuable shoes in the world today originally retailed for very little, but they connected with people in unimaginable ways because they embodied the spirit of the wearer. Just ask Nike and some dude called Michael.



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But what if I can’t afford shoes you ask? You’re still going to find a way to protect your feet, no? Think all the way back to basic function. Because if you really think about it, even if you step out without shoes on, *you will get noticed.*

Think about it.

ABOUT ISAAC KWAME ADOM

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