

## **Purpose**

Our client for this project is Reebok. Reebok was founded in England in the 1895 by J.W. Foster. In 1979, the company began distributing to centers in North America. Today, Reebok ranks second in the United States in sports footwear, following its merger with Adidas in 2005. In 2009, Reebok introduced a new line of fitness shoes under the sub-brand Easytone that were specially designed for muscle toning. Then in November 2010, a line of Easytone clothing was launched with the same purpose. Reebok has recently encountered competition in the market for muscle toning shoes. As a result of increased competition, Reebok needs to monitor consumer feedback to ensure they are effectively reaching the target public and if changes need to be made to maintain and/or establish a competitive advantage.

## **Methodology**

In order to successfully track our client, we had to establish key terms to use in our online search for conversation regarding the Reebok Easytone line. Initially, we searched using the term “Reebok” and encountered an enormous amount of information that irrelevant to our topic. We altered our search terms to “Reebok Easytone,” which yielded the best results.

Google Alerts were utilized using our search terms to uncover conversations on blogs, forums and consumer based websites. We also searched for relevant content on the major social networking sites Facebook and Twitter. Digital content was also monitored through the examination of Youtube videos. The content we monitored took place between April 1, 2009 and February 9, 2011. Based on the timing of the product launches, we felt it was necessary to monitor this time frame to accurately understand the opinion of consumers. Thus, we were able to track the feeling from the time of launch up to the present time. Credibility was measured through Quantcast.

## **Results**

Based on our research of blogs and forums, there seems to be two main ideas behind the whole concept of toning shoes (which in turn effects the view of Reebok Easytones). They either completely believe that these shoes make your butt / thighs firmer, and therefore stand behind it completely. Or, there are the skeptics that deem it a “fad” with no proof to back it up. One report even attacked Reebok and indicated an injury from toning shoes. Reebok was quick to respond that since it was not their brand and there are no such reported problems with Reeboks, that prospective consumers and already loyal customers need not be concerned. While the general consensus is positive, this may be a possible “threat” to future sales of the sneakers. Possible research and time will tell whether loyalty can last long enough to continue sales in the future.

After examining consumer reviews, the USP we got from reading reviews was that compared to other toning shoes, the Reebok Easytone was the most fashionable. Overall consensus is positive once again. The primary negative comments made about the Easytone line dealt with the comfort of the shoes, sizes of the apparel and price of the line. Many have complained that after a while their feet would hurt so much that they had to stop wearing the product. One point highlighted in





a lot of reviews is the high price of Easytone products. Seeing as women are the primary target, they generally wish to try something out rather than just putting forth the \$100 investment in purchasing the product. Consumers also discussed the relatively small size that Easytone apparel runs.

On Facebook and Twitter, users discussed their opinions of the products on designated fan pages and by using the hashtags, #reebok and #easytone. Facebook features two fan pages for consumers to converse about products in the Reebok Fan Page and Easytone Fan Page. The overall feeling of consumers was positive in regard to Easytone products. However, negative comments were made concerning price, durability, and comfort. The moderator of the fan pages was active in responding to a number of comments. Based on the comments made, the moderator seems to be a representative of Reebok. This was also the case with Twitter. Using the designated hashtags, consumers commented on a number of topics related to the products. A moderator operates the Reebok page on Twitter and responds to tweets made about the products.

Our search of Youtube revealed digital content paired with conversation concerning Easytone products. Four videos were found dealing with specifically Easytone products. Each video received numerous hits and three featured comments from viewers. Once again, a majority of the conversation dealt with consumer opinion of the product in terms of comfort, durability, price, and effectiveness.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, we found that Reebok has a positive reputation overall. They have developed a fan-base of brand loyal customers-- young to middle-aged adult women. Reebok also engages in effective two-way communication-- using their Facebook to track customers' comments. They promptly responded to any consumer or customer service questions. They even answered in a different language if a customer did not write them in English. The Reebok Easytone has an advantage over other competitive brands offering the same kind of product. The reason many women chose the Easytone over any other toning shoe, is due to looks. Reebok should continue to offer up-to-date styles and push the fashion concept as a USP in the future.

While there are a definite group of fans of the toning shoe, there are more bloggers and reporters exposing the notion that it's nothing more than a scam or fad. They suggest that no such evidence exists to support claims made by Reebok. The company may consider funding research of the effectiveness of toning shoes or recruit a spokesperson from the medical industry to endorse the product. This way, the company could possibly secure their toning shoes as a proposition for the future and avoid them dying out like a trend.

Also, quality is an issue that Reebok needs to address. Many complaints on Facebook and Amazon say that the ball of the shoe, a necessary component of the footwear, goes flat in just a matter of months. While Reebok is quick to respond on Facebook and through email by offering replacement shoes, one customer complained that Reebok could not help her since it was just over a year since she had purchased her shoes. Like many other customers, she pointed out that a \$100 shoe would be of that value if it lasted over a year. The company should research materials and create balls that do not flatten so quickly.



Sources	Source Credibility	Date/Time	Feedback
<b>YouTube: Reebok EasyTones: Don't waste your money</b>	<b>4212 views; 82 likes; 5 dislikes.</b> <b>Quantcast:</b> Reaches 124 million people monthly in the U.S. The site attracts a younger dominantly Caucasian demographic. <b>U.S. Rank 3</b>	Posted May 21, 2010	136 comments made. General consensus of the comments made were positive about the video and negative about the shoe line. The movie was a customer and well known YouTube video maker who did a product review. Not very professionally done. Opinion based.
<b>YouTube: Reebok EasyTone Product Review</b>	<b>244,184 views; 124 likes; 50 dislikes.</b> <b>Quantcast:</b> Reaches 124 million people monthly in the U.S. The site attracts a younger dominantly Caucasian demographic. <b>U.S. Rank 3</b>	Posted May 12, 2009	203 comments made. General consensus of the comments made were positive about the product. The movie was made by a fitness guru who reviews fitness gear as it comes out. Fact and usage based.
<b>YouTube: Reebok EasyTone University Project</b>	<b>168,108 views; 39 likes; 58 dislikes.</b> <b>Quantcast:</b> Reaches 124 million people monthly in the U.S. The site attracts a younger dominantly Caucasian demographic. <b>U.S. Rank 3</b>	Posted April 27, 2009	60 comments made. General consensus of comments made were positive about the shoe, negative about the video. School project that focuses more on film angling rather than the product itself.
<b>Twitter: Amazon _ Top_ Tipp</b>	<b>Followers: 215, Following: 668, Tweets: 1,495</b> <b>Quantcast:</b> reaches 81.6 million people monthly in the U.S. The site dominantly attracts a young adult, Caucasian demographic. <b>U.S. Rank 6</b>	February 11, 2011	"Bests in Shoes: Reebok Women's EasyTone Reeinspire Walking Shoe Reebok 376 days in the top 100"



<p><b>Twitter: tonyalee</b></p>	<p><b>Followers: 204,</b> <b>Following: 172,</b> <b>Tweets: 3,846</b> <b>Quantcast:</b> reaches 81.6 million people monthly in the U.S. The site dominantly attracts a young adult, Caucasian demographic. <b>U.S. Rank 6</b></p>	<p>February 6, 2011</p>	<p>“Ummm... What? Not sure how I feel about Kim K on Skechers shape ups! Still not buying them! <a href="#">#reebok</a> <a href="#">#easytone</a> all day”</p>
<p><b>Facebook: Reebok Fan Page</b></p>	<p><b>Likes: 320,018</b> <b>Quantcast:</b> Reaches 134 million people monthly in the U.S. The site attracts a younger audience. <b>U.S. Rank 2</b></p>	<p>January 2011</p>	<p>Profile created to attract Facebook users to discuss Reebok and further promote the brand. Page is monitored by a spokesperson who actively responds to comments, sometime in languages other than English.</p>
<p><b>Facebook: Reebok Easytone</b></p>	<p><b>Likes: 1,615</b> <b>Quantcast:</b> Reaches 134 million people monthly in the U.S. The site attracts a younger audience. <b>U.S. Rank 2</b></p>	<p>January 2011</p>	<p>Profile created to reach the targeted audience for Reebok’s new line of shoes and apparel. Page allows users to post comments, photos, and videos about the product, helping to further promote the brand.</p>
<p><b>Amazon.com Reviews: Reebok Reinspire I Walking Shoe</b></p>	<p><b>101 Comments</b> <b>Quantcast:</b> Reaches 85.3 million people monthly in the U.S. The site attracts a middle-aged dominantly Caucasian demographic <b>U.S. Rank 5</b></p>	<p>January 2011</p>	<p>5 Star: (52) 4 Star: (22) 3 Star: (6) 2 Star: (5) 1 Star: (16)</p> <p>Generally, there is a positive view of the product by consumers. However, price and durability are a common concern.</p>
<p><b>Amazon.com Reviews: Reebok Women’s Easytone Pants</b></p>	<p><b>5 Comments</b> <b>Quantcast:</b> Reaches 85.3 million people monthly in the U.S.</p>	<p>January 16, 2011</p>	<p>5 Star: (2) 4 Star: (2) 3 Star: (0) 2 Star: (0)</p>



	The site attracts a middle aged dominantly Caucasian demographic <b>U.S. Rank 5</b>		1 Star: (1)  Overall, a positive view is held by consumers, but a general concern for price and comfort is present. More reviews are likely as timeframe ventures away from the November 2010 launch date.
<b>Amazon.com Reviews: Reebok Reinspire II Walking Shoe</b>	<b>47 Comments</b> <b>Quantcast:</b> Reaches 85.3 million people monthly in the U.S. The site attracts a middle aged dominantly Caucasian demographic <b>U.S. Rank 5</b>	As Of February 9, 2011	5 Star: (19) 4 Star: (16) 3 Star: (4) 2 Star: (4) 1 Star: (4)  Overall, customers have a positive view of the product with 83% of customer giving it three or more stars.
<b>Google Alerts: Las Cruces Sun-News</b>	<b>Quantcast:</b> Reaches 147,200 people monthly. The site primarily attracts a middle-aged female demographic. <b>U.S. Rank 12,870</b>	February 9, 2011 1:00 am	<i>Can toning shoes really change your shape?</i> "It may be a fad that will come and go," Article explaining that there is no formal research done on toning shoes that suggests they work.
<b>Google Alerts: moondowner.com</b>	Blog by Derek Powazek powered by Wordpress. <b>Quantcast:</b> Reaches 43.6 million people per month in the U.S. <b>U.S. Rank 21</b>	February 1, 2011	The best footwear in the marketplace at the moment has got to be the Reebok Easytone. It seems like everybody has become pumped up about what this shoe is able to do."
<b>Google Alerts: Mommy Katie Blog</b>	<b>Quantcast:</b> Reaches 1,900 people per monthly, primarily a female demographic between the ages of 18-49. <b>U.S. Rank 520,294</b>	February 3, 2011	"But I would much rather wear a pair of toning shoes that are not only comfortable but look good as well! And that is the reason why I fell in love with the Reebok EasyTones! These shoes are awesome and very stylish too!"
<b>Google Alerts:</b>	<b>Quantcast:</b> Reaches	February 4, 2011	<i>Kelly Brook shows off her sexy</i>



<p><b>Metro UK News</b></p>	<p>189,800 people per month in the United States with a concentration of readership by men 18-34. <b>U.S. Rank 10,206</b></p>		<p><i>bikini body at swimwear shoot</i> “Speaking at the event last week Kelly put her fabulous figure down to a simple exercise regime. She said: 'I enjoy pilates and I do a lot of walking in my Easytone trainers and that's about it for me really.’”</p>
<p><b>Google Alerts: The Telegraph UK</b></p>	<p><b>Quantcast:</b> Reaches 1.9 million people per month with a slightly larger male demographic. <b>U.S. Rank 833</b></p>	<p>February 7, 2011</p>	<p>MBT’s: Time to Tread Carefully? ”New Yorker and water-birth specialist Judith Halek, 55, sustained the same injury while wearing another brand of toning shoes, Skechers Shape-ups, which use a heel higher than the middle to encourage muscle toning. Halek fell when her foot turned inwards as she stepped from a 9in-high concrete pavement on to the road.” ReTweets: At least 6, support article. 2 Comments: Against Article Easytones: Mentioned 5 times.</p>
<p><b>Reebok.com Reviews</b></p>	<p><b>Quantcast:</b> Reaches 640,400 people per month with a slightly larger female demographic. <b>U.S. Rank 3,120</b></p>	<p>November 8, 2011</p>	<p>Overall, positive opinion of the product. Reebok.com allows consumers to post feedback about the product using a rating scale that enables the product to be ranked from 1 to 5 stars, as well as measured based on size, comfort, durability, and width.</p>

