The production of Nike shoes, as with all other consumer products, starts in the research and development phase. Their goal is to create shoes that identify the physiological needs of athletes. Nike’s research facilities utilize many different technologies to design and develop the most effective shoe designs. These technologies include pressure sensors around the foot, as well as 3-d imaging technologies used to map a foot as it performs various actions, such as kicking a soccer ball or running over a bump. The shoes are also tested on the same surfaces they are designed to occupy. The advanced technology used in the testing and development of these products allows Nike to advertise their shoes as the most innovative product on the market.

The name Nike brings to mind a standard of performance, and the brand name itself is named after Nike, the goddess of victory. In order to establish this standard, Nike must use a very strong marketing strategy. Along with the innovation in design boasted by the company, Nike regularly shows endorsements from athletes from around the world. These advertisements come in many different forms, from television advertisements, to paper advertisements, to showing the logo on professional sports team’s uniforms. Consumers now equate Nike products with innovation, quality, and performance, and the brand has gained itself global fame.

In order to meet the demand that this global fame brings, Nike must be able to produce its goods on a massive scale. To do this, the company uses many factories across many countries, mainly in Asia, to manufacture shoes, as well as other Nike products. Instead of owning the factories that make the products, Nike utilizes factories owned by independent subcontractors, and pays these companies to produce their goods. However, Nike has a division set up to survey the working conditions, as well as production quality, of these factories, visiting them weekly. Even with this team, Nike has faced several violations in regards to human rights and working conditions in the factories that manufacture their product, and although these violations have been addressed, and steps have been taken to resolve them, the problems still remain.

After the manufacturing process, Nike must have a way to present the product to the consumer. Nike shoes, like most other shoe companies, use cardboard shoe boxes to package their product. However, this presented a large problem in regard to waste. The corrugated cardboard used in the boxes contributed largely to the amount of waste associated with the life cycle of a pair of Nike shoes. To combat this, Nike implemented a new design of shoe box, not only using less material, causing the packaging to weigh twenty percent less than before, but also using a new material that is recyclable, reducing waste from shoeboxes greatly. Naturally, each box is stamped with the signature Nike “swoosh” logo, immediately identify the product to consumers.

Once the products are packaged, they must have a way to reach the consumer. Nike ships its product, using sea and air shipments, from the factories overseas to its various
distribution centers around the world. For the United States, this distribution center is in Memphis Tennessee. This facility covers 2.8 million square feet, and distributes Nike products to individual consumers, wholesale customers, as well as retail stores, throughout the U.S. The shoes are then sold from a wide variety of sources, including online retailers and large retail stores. Nike also owns distribution centers in many other countries, each one distributing the products to consumers in that country.

After a consumer purchases the product, they do with the shoes what anyone would expect, wear them. Many athletes choose Nike shoes due to their innovative designs and proven success. Aside from athletes, many other people wear Nike shoes due to the durability, comfortability, and design of the shoes. How long the shoes last depends on how the user wears them. The lifespan of a shoe can be expanded greatly with proper care and maintenance, while heavy use in rough conditions can shorten the lifespan greatly. The consumers can vary from professional athletes to young children.

After the lifespan of the shoe has run its course, it must be disposed of. Although many people simply throw their shoes into a landfill, Nike aims to reduce waste from its shoes through its "reuse a shoe" program. This program takes old, unwearable shoes and reuses the materials to help make new ones. For example, the rubber soles of shoes can be shredded and reformed into brand new soles, off putting the need to produce more rubber. For one pair of shoes disposed of by Nike, an average twenty one grams of material reaches a landfill. However, for that same pair, about one hundred and twenty grams are reused or recycled in some way.
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