



# Marketing Communications Strategy



## Executive Summary

Vans ‘Off The Wall’ is a marketing communications strategy focussed on repositioning the Vans brand as New Zealand’s industry leader in action sports and lifestyle fashion, bringing Vans inline with their US brand positioning.

The ‘Vans Off The Wall’ campaign will achieve this over a 5 year period by setting key short-term campaign objectives, starting with three 12 month objectives.

- Increasing brand awareness in the target audience by 16% in order to create 100% brand awareness of Vans footwear and apparel amongst their target audience.
- Re-positioning Vans to come into line with the US market positioning.
- Increasing Vans footwear sales by 15% to bring total sales up to the current level of Nike.

The campaign will integrate multiple media channels; online, mobile, print, retail stores and sponsorship, with creative elements aimed at engaging the target audience while delivering four key campaign messages.

- The original action sports brand and leader in lifestyle fashion.
- Supporter of youth culture, music, action sports and lifestyle.
- 40 plus year heritage of authenticity, originality, self-expression and non-conformity.
- Leading brand with action sports athletes, enthusiasts and followers.

The Vans ‘Off The Wall’ marketing campaign will progress through stages, with each individual creative element aimed at engaging the target audience in specific ways. Starting with building brand awareness, then engaging the target audience and reminding them of the brand benefits. As well as encouraging



product trial, growing Vans brand throughout the action sports and music industry's, and developing the Vans culture amongst New Zealand's youth.

Vans currently display no real direction or focus with regards to marketing their brand in New Zealand. By developing an integrated marketing communications strategy Vans will deliver clear and concise campaign messages, while building a more intimate relationship with it's target audience and ultimately achieve it's long-term objective of becoming New Zealand's industry leader in action sports and lifestyle fashion.



## Table of Contents

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION - VANS ‘OFF THE WALL’</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1.0 CAMPAIGN FUNDAMENTALS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.1 TARGET AUDIENCE</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1.A ANALYSIS	6
1.1.B SEGMENTATION	7
<b>1.2 CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1.3 BRAND POSITIONING</b>	<b>10</b>
1.3.A POSITIONING STATEMENT	11
<b>2.0 CAMPAIGN STRATEGY</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2.1 CAMPAIGN MESSAGE</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>2.2 MEDIA CHANNELS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>2.3 CREATIVE ELEMENTS</b>	<b>15</b>
2.3.A ONLINE	15
2.3.B MOBILE	21
2.3.C PRINT	22
2.3.D RETAIL STORES	23
2.3.E SPONSORSHIP	26
<b>2.4 PROMOTIONAL ELEMENTS</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>2.5 CAMPAIGN TIMING</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>3.0 CAMPAIGN MANAGEMENT PLAN</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>3.1 CAMPAIGN BUDGET</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>3.2 MEASUREMENT OF OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>3.3 LONG-TERM STRATEGY MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>REFERENCE NOTE</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>36</b>



## Introduction - Vans ‘Off The Wall’

By building a marketing campaign around a well-established and iconic symbol of Vans, a familiarity with the campaign will exist, relating back to Vans global brand.

‘Off The Wall’ is Vans corporate logo and was first seen on a Vans skateboarding shoe in 1976. ‘Off The Wall’ is now seen on all of Vans footwear. The saying ‘Off The Wall’ derives from the mid 70’s when skateboarders riding swimming pools would say they were coming off the wall. Vans were seen as being a little bit different and edgy so ‘Off The Wall’ stuck as a corporate logo. (Van Doran, 2008)

This report is the third in a series of three papers, focusing on re-positioning the Vans brand in New Zealand. The report is based on the first two papers; Target Market Analysis – Vans New Zealand and Vans Creative Brief. This report will bring the research, understanding and learning gained from the first two papers together to develop a plan for implementing an integrated marketing communications strategy for Vans in New Zealand.

We will start by formulating the fundamentals of the marketing campaign by breaking down and segmenting the target audience, defining key campaign objectives and establishing Vans brand positioning.

We will then go on to develop the campaign strategy by establishing clear campaign messages, identifying the required media channels, developing the creative and promotional elements and structuring all of this into an initial campaign timeline.

Finally we will show how the campaign will be managed by outlining a preliminary budget, discussing methods of measuring the campaign objectives and developing ideas in maintaining a long-term marketing communications strategy.



## 1.0 Campaign Fundamentals

Based on what we have learnt in part one of this series of three reports, the Target Market Analysis; we are able to clearly identify and define the three fundamental components of our campaign strategy. The target audience, campaign objectives and Vans brand positioning.

### 1.1 Target Audience

Since their foundation in the late 1960’s, Vans have identified with the youth culture, targeting action sports athletes, enthusiasts and followers.

Vans cater to a wide range of consumers, offering over 200 men’s and women’s shoe styles, sized from infants to adults, as well as apparel and accessory lines including clothing, watches, belts, bags and hats.

Vans also identify with the alternative youth music industry where Vans have shown heavy involvement internationally, but particularly in the US. Vans target audience however is quite defined.

*‘Vans is a niche lifestyle brand targeting 15-24 year old youths who identify with action sports culture and lifestyle fashion’.*

- In New Zealand Vans target audience represents approximately 525,000 consumers (2011).
- This number will, by my calculations grow to approximately 680,000 consumers by 2015 and 746,000 by 2020.

#### 1.1.a Analysis

Based on research undertaken by myself in September 2011 we are able to better understand Vans target audience in New Zealand. This research can be summarised by the following key points.



- Due to the fact that Nike, Vans, Converse and Globe accounted for 76% of the most preferred skate/street shoe brands, we can assume that the brand name and image have some influence over consumer purchasing decisions.
- 85% of Vans target audience prefer alternative skate/street shoe brands.
- Comfort, style, price and the latest fashions in colour and design are more important than brand names when considering a shoe purchase. Youth consumers are influenced by the image and style of the top lifestyle brands but do not seem to be brand loyal.
- In-store point of sale advertising is the most influential media in consumer decision making, suggesting that action sports and lifestyle brands are not heavily marketed, with little presence outside of retail stores.
- 47% of Vans target audience perceive Vans as a has-been brand or have not heard of them. On the other hand 30% see Vans as a quality, high-end brand, and 15% perceive Vans as an industry leader. These figures would suggest that an inconsistent message is being delivered to consumers.
- No individual action sports lifestyle brand is seen as the market leader.
- Lifestyle shoes and apparel are central to youth consumer fashion and culture, an expression of style and personality.
- Youth consumers spend a considerable portion of their discretionary income, and time on finding lifestyle fashion products to meet their personal taste and style, avoiding mainstream generic brands.

### **1.1.b Segmentation**

Although Vans target audience is quite defined and represents a very specific niche market, we can further segment this group of consumers by how they



identify with action sports. Identifying these market segments and their behavioural attributes will enable us to better define the objectives and reasoning associated with our creative and media strategies.

Vans target audience can be segmented into action sports athletes, enthusiasts and followers.

**Athletes:**

Is the smallest segment and are those consumers who actively compete in their chosen action sport, be it skateboarding, BMX, motocross, snowboarding, surfing or wakeboarding.

This market segment demands the very best in comfort, quality and durability in their footwear and apparel. They will always be wearing the latest in fashion and style, are brand conscious, and are consumer leaders.

At the elite end of this market segment are the sponsored athletes. The sponsored athletes represent a brand within the action sports’ competitive arena as well as within the market as a whole.

**Enthusiasts:**

Is the second largest segment and are those consumers who actively participate in their chosen action sports but do not compete.

This market segment will also demand a high level of comfort, quality and durability in their footwear and apparel, and will often be seen wearing the latest in fashion and style.

‘Athletes’, sponsored riders and the latest in fashion and style influence enthusiasts, and they are likely to attend action sports competitions and events, as well as frequenting local parks and specialist stores. These consumers are also likely to purchase action sports magazines as well as equipment or gear.





## **Followers:**

Is the largest segment and are those consumers who neither compete nor participate in action sports but identify with or have an interest in them, or just identify with the culture, fashion and style.

This market segment does not necessarily demand the same quality and durability as ‘Enthusiasts’ and ‘Athletes’ but may still demand the latest in fashion and style. Followers are also more likely to respond to clearance sales of old stock, and shop online.

Followers are influenced more so by the fashion industry as a whole, than by ‘Enthusiasts’ and ‘Athletes’, and will consider comfort, style and price as well as the latest fashions when purchasing.

## **1.2 Campaign Objectives**

The Vans ‘Off The Wall’ marketing campaign’s key long-term objective is.

*‘To become New Zealand’s industry leader in action sports and lifestyle fashion’*

This objective will take some time to achieve so will be developed over a 5 year period. In order to achieve the ultimate long-term goal, a series of short-term objectives will be set. Short-term objectives will be measured and assessed on an annual basis with the results shaping the direction of future short-term objectives, ultimately leading to achieving the long-term objective by the end of the campaign’s 5th year.

As the campaign develops over time the objectives as well as the creative elements will be developed and refined.

In this report we will focus on the first 12 months of the campaign strategy, outlining the following three key objectives. Once these objectives have been



measured and assessed, they will be re-set and aligned with the overall long-term objective of the campaign strategy.

- Increase brand awareness in the target audience by 16% in order to create 100% brand awareness of Vans footwear and apparel amongst their target audience.
- Re-position Vans to come into line with the US market positioning.
- Increase Vans footwear sales by 15% to bring total sales up to the current level of Nike.

By reaching these three key short-term campaign objects, a platform can be set to identify further objectives from.

Future campaign objectives will be able to become more specifically aligned with the individual creative elements, outlined later in this report. Associated for example with the level of athlete, industry, park and music sponsorship, the number of ‘Vans Customs’ sold and the number of apps downloaded.

### **1.3 Brand Positioning**

Currently Vans is perceived vastly differently in New Zealand compared to in the US. A key objective of the Vans ‘Of The Wall’ campaign is to bring these brand positioning’s inline.

#### **US:**

Vans global and US brand image of originality and self-expression, as well as their 40 plus year heritage with action sports and youth culture, provide them the authenticity and credibility to be the leading brand with action sports athletes, enthusiasts and followers.



By supporting the action sports industry as well as the youth music and arts scenes, Vans has developed -

- A positioning as the original skateboarding brand, at the heart of the action sports and youth culture.
- The perception of not only being the leading footwear and lifestyle brand, but also a way of life.
- The perception of having a rich heritage of action sports, youth entertainment and non-conformity

#### **New Zealand:**

Vans is a well known and respected brand in New Zealand, but does not carry a leadership roll in the action sports industry and youth culture.

Vans positioning in New Zealand is based more upon the core product benefits than the associated brand value benefits as seen in the US.

- Perceived more as a durable, quality skateboarding shoe than a youth lifestyle brand.
- Is perceived as a ‘has been’ brand not in tune with the current youth market and lifestyle fashion.

#### **1.3.a Positioning Statement**

As discussed earlier, the key objective of the Vans ‘Off The Wall’ marketing campaign is to re-position Vans as the industry leader in action sports and youth lifestyle fashion in New Zealand, bringing Vans market positioning in New Zealand inline with that seen in the US.



Vans is a leading global action sports and lifestyle brand, so it is important to deliver a consistent marketing message throughout all international markets, creating a consistent brand positioning. This starts with a clear and unique positioning statement.

*Vans. ‘The original action sports brand and leader in lifestyle fashion-wear. Long standing supporter of youth culture the world over’.*

## 2.0 Campaign Strategy

Based on what we have learnt in part two of this series of three reports, the Creative Brief; we are able to build on and expand our thinking to developing the Vans ‘Off The Wall’ marketing



campaign strategy. Here we have clearly identified the campaign messages and media channels used, as well as refining the creative elements and campaign timing.

Because the objective of the campaign is essentially to re-position Vans in the New Zealand market as apposed to launching a new product or brand, the campaign will have a programmed long-term strategy, deployed, developed and evolved over time.

The campaign encompasses a wide range of elements and activities, each with individual objectives and messages, while contributing to the overall short-term and long-term campaign objectives.



The campaign will go through stages of:

- Building brand awareness.
- Engaging the target audience and reminding of the brand benefits.
- Encouraging product trial.
- Growing Vans brand throughout the action sports and music industry’s.
- Developing the Vans culture amongst New Zealand’s youth.

## **2.1 Campaign Message**

Having established a positioning statement it is important to also deliver a clear and consistent message throughout all marketing activities. Each of the creative components of the Vans ‘Off The Wall’ marketing campaign will deliver one or more of the following key campaign messages.

- The original action sports brand and leader in lifestyle fashion.
- Supporter of youth culture, music, action sports and lifestyle.
- 40 plus year heritage of authenticity, originality, self-expression and non-conformity.
- Leading brand with action sports athletes, enthusiasts and followers.

By effectively delivering these key campaign messages, Vans ‘Off The Wall’ will develop a positioning while leading the target audience towards achieving the short-term objectives and ultimately the overall long-term objective.

## **2.2 Media Channels**

The Vans ‘Off The Wall’ marketing campaign will make use of both online and off line media in order to effectively reach the target audience, but more specifically reach the individual market segments.

Media channels will also carry individual objectives, leading towards achieving the short-term campaign objectives.



All campaign media channels will be integrated logically via the Vans website. The website is the face and hub of the Vans ‘Off The Wall’ campaign, supporting all creative elements and providing a central point of navigation to all marketing activities.

Tying all creative elements together visually will be the colours black, red and white and the Vans ‘Off The Wall’ logo. This logo is widely used throughout the world of Vans and can be found on packaging, promotional material and online media. Building on this already established branding, the Vans ‘Off The Wall’ marketing campaign will gain instant recall and recognition.

Emotionally however the Vans ‘Off The Wall’ campaign elements will be unified by a common message and culture. A brand image built over 40 plus years of involvement, support and leadership of action sports and youth culture.

#### **Online:**

Encompassing a revamped website, online store, Vans Customs and social media, the online media is targeted to all market segments with the objective of raising brand awareness, engaging the target audience and building consumer/brand relationships.

#### **Mobile:**

Smartphone apps based directly on the US models will be used to engage consumers and create interaction, as well as offering news and information. Apps will essentially be targeted towards the ‘Athletes’ and ‘Enthusiasts’ but may also interest some keen followers. Apps will include ‘Vans SK8: Pool Service’ - a skateboarding game, and ‘House Of Vans NZ’ – an interactive information and news hub.

#### **Print:**

Featuring in action sports and industry magazines, print media will be used to create awareness, advertise, promote and reinforce Vans brand positioning and image. Targeted essentially to the ‘Athletes’ and ‘Enthusiasts’, Vans will feature



in magazines such as No Limits, NZ Snowboarder, Manual Magazine and NZ Surfer Magazine.

### **Retail Stores:**

With the core objective of selling shoes and apparel, retail stores are targeted to all segments. Point of sale advertising and staff/store promotions will be undertaken essentially to raise sales, and the Vans Concept Store will be developed as the home of Vans in New Zealand.

### **Sponsorship:**

Encompassing action sports athletes, parks, music and events; sponsorship is used to reinforce Vans brand positioning and image by being actively involved in and engaging in the action sports and youth culture. Targeted mainly towards the ‘Athletes’ and ‘Enthusiasts’, sponsorship will also filter through to the ‘Followers’ by creating brand awareness and exposure.

## **2.3 Creative Elements**

Based on the five media categories we can now identify the individual creative components that will make up the Vans ‘Off The Wall’ marketing campaign. Each creative element will have individual short-term campaign objectives and carry a specific campaign message.

### **2.3.a Online**

Online media is a key element to the Vans ‘Of The Wall’ campaign strategy, re-introducing Vans to New Zealand consumers and creating brand awareness.

Vans currently have very little online presence. By increasing online presence and engaging the target audience Vans will develop a stronger and more personal relationship with its consumers.

Vans ‘Off The Wall’ will focus on four key online media channels. The Vans website with the online store and Vans Customs, and social media networks.



**www.vans.co.nz:**

Vans current website is out dated in both content and functionality. www.vans.co.nz will be fully revamped offering consumers a place to go to for the latest news and information on not only the world of Vans, but also the latest in action sports and youth lifestyle.

The website will be engaging and interactive, the face of Vans in New Zealand and the key linkage of all campaign media channels, setting the overall look, tone and feel of the campaign, as well as assuming the role as the campaign hub.

- Content will be up to date and relevant to New Zealand consumers, with stories and profiles of local sponsored riders. Videos of recent events, big and small, as well as pro tour videos will be available for viewing.
  - Fans will be able to follow their favourite pro’s blogs and keep up to date with how they are getting on or where they will be competing next.
  - Users will find information on the latest Vans products and where they can buy them as well as having access to smart phone app downloads, ‘Vans Customs’, the online store and competitions.
- **Objectives:** To inform consumers and raise brand awareness, while developing an interactive and long-term relationship with the target audience.
  - **Message:** Leading brand with action sports athletes, enthusiasts and followers.
  - **Timing:** Will go live at the campaign’s spring launch.





### Vans Customs:

Vans heritage was built on the customisation concept, a tradition that has carried with Vans since it’s inception.

- By offering ‘Vans Customs’ to New Zealand consumers, Vans will create a distinct competitive advantage over competing footwear brands that do not offer this personalised service, reinforcing Vans brand positioning.
  - Purchasers of custom Vans will become brand loyal as well as being walking word-of-mouth advertising.
  - ‘Vans Customs’ will initially be available in the Slip On, moving to the Era, Old School and 106 styles if the concept proves to be successful.
- **Objectives:** To engage the target audience, bringing them to the website and encouraging consumer interaction. Create a competitive advantage and reinforce Vans brand positioning as an industry leader while developing loyal customers.
  - **Message:** 40 plus year heritage of authenticity, originality, self-expression and non-conformity.
  - **Timing:** Launched with the revamped website at the spring campaign launch and promoted via Facebook (FB), Twitter and magazine advertising. Vans customs will then be available indefinitely.



### Online Store:

The convenience of online shopping has led it to become a popular method of purchasing, in the comfort of home or at work. Vans will be offering a service that is appreciated, but also expected by today’s technology savvy consumers.

- Expand Vans product range to offer consumers a more comprehensive selection, meeting the latest in fashion and styles.
  - Offer promotions to sell old stock, freeing up warehouse space and moving inventory.
  - Sell directly to the consumer in real time, offering better service and gaining higher margins.
- **Objectives:** To engage the target audience, bringing them to the website and increasing sales.
  - **Message:** Leader in lifestyle fashion-wear.
  - **Timing:** Launched with the revamped website at the spring campaign launched and promoted via FB and Twitter. The online store will then be available indefinitely.



### Competitions:

Vans ‘Off The Wall’ will run a multitude of engaging competitions aimed at interacting with the target audience. Competitions are fun and everyone loves to win something.

- ‘Create On Canvas Contest’ will be launched via the Vans website and will require entrants to design a custom slip on shoe, with the best design winning a pair of Slip On’s of their winning design.



Six pairs of Slip On’s will be given away in six categories, being males and females under 15 years old, 15-19 years old and over 20 years old.

The key objective of the ‘Create On Canvas Contest’ is to promote and highlight ‘Vans Customs’.

- Throughout the course of the Vans ‘Off The Wall’ marketing campaign, competitions will be run via the website, FB, mobile phone and in-store. New competitions will be designed as the campaign develops and may include the following.
  - Best trick video to win a day riding with a pro
  - Text to win an all expenses paid trip to the ‘Bowl a Rama’ in Sydney.
  - Design a sticker competition for kids to go in the draw to win Vans gear.
  - ‘Classic Tales’ where the best Vans story wins Vans gear.
  - Download ‘House of Vans NZ’ to win an iPad.
  - Register on FB then be one of the first 100 shoppers in line at the Vans Concept Store opening day to receive a free goodie bag.
- **Objectives:** To Engage the target audience with direct interaction through multiple medias. Create a buzz while launching new products as well as building brand loyalty.
- **Message:** Heritage of authenticity, originality and self-expression, and supporter of youth culture, action sports and lifestyle.
- **Timing:** ‘Create On Canvas Contest’ launched pre-Christmas on the Vans website and promoted via FB, Twitter and magazine advertising.



## Social Media:

Vans will keep in touch and in tune with its target audience by being online when and where they are.

- Facebook
  - Run and promote competitions, launch new products and keep consumers informed of what is happening in the world of Vans with the latest news and upcoming events.
  - Support and promote, as well as link back to Vans website.
  - Interact directly with the target audience at their own level as well as creating a personal connection.
  
- Twitter
  - Promote the launch of new products and keep consumers informed of what is happening in the world of Vans with the latest news and upcoming events.
  - Link back to the Vans website.
  - Interact directly with the target audience at their level as well as creating a personal connection.
  
- **Objectives:** Build brand awareness and loyalty by engaging and interacting directly with the target audience.
- **Message:** Leading brand with action sports athletes, enthusiasts and followers, and supporter of youth culture and lifestyle.
- **Timing:** Pages launched at the spring campaign launch.



### 2.3.b Mobile

Vans ‘Off The Wall’ will embrace technology by going mobile with two purpose built smartphone apps aimed at engaging the target audience. ‘Text to win’ competitions will also be run.

- ‘Vans SK8: Pool Service’ is a skateboarding game already available via the US website and app store. This would simply be made available to New Zealand consumers via the New Zealand Website. ‘Vans SK8: Pool Service’ will be available as a free lite-version or the full version for \$4.19.
  - ‘House Of Vans NZ’ will be based on the US app but adapted to fit the New Zealand market. The app will be a mobile extension of the Vans website with live news, event updates and information feeds. Users will be able to browse featured products, find the nearest Vans stockist, watch featured videos, share their favourite blogs and products with friends, and keep up to date with what is going on in the world on Vans.
  - As highlighted earlier ‘text to win’ competitions will be run where entrants are required to register their details online. Once registered they will be able to submit entry codes found in various locations, via SMS to enter a draw to win.
  - Consumers registered with Vans mobile would have the option to receive product updates and special offers via SMS or email.
- **Objectives:** To modernize Vans image while engaging and informing the target audience with direct interaction, as well as reinforcing Vans brand positioning.
  - **Message:** Leading brand with action sports athletes, enthusiasts and followers,
  - **Timing:** Apps will be promoted and made available on the Vans website and FB, pre-Christmas.





### 2.3.c Print

Vans ‘Off The Wall’ will run feature stories, advertising and catalogue listings, and support other marketing activities through industry and lifestyle magazines. Print media will be used as and when required throughout the life of the marketing campaign, including.

- At the campaign launch to promote ‘Vans Customs’, as well as creating buzz around the soon to open ‘Vans Concept Store’.
- Advertise the pre-Christmas opening of the ‘Vans Concept Store’ with the event schedule and details through leading lifestyle and action sports magazines, as well as promoting the ‘Create On Canvas contest’.
- Promote the summer opening of the first Vans ‘Off The Wall’ action sports parks in relevant action sports magazines.
- Quarterly catalogues featuring new season products in leading lifestyle and action sports magazines.
- Vans ‘Off The Wall’ will focus on leading industry magazines such as No Limits, NZ Snowboarder, Manual Magazine and NZ Surfer Magazine.

- **Objectives:** To create awareness and remind of campaign activities while improving brand recall. Build brand image by being seen in the right places, reinforcing brand positioning.
- **Message:** The original action sports brand and Leader with action sports athletes, enthusiasts and followers.
- **Timing:** Used at various times to promote and advertise Vans ‘Off The Wall’ campaign activities throughout the life of the campaign.



#### 2.3.d Retail Stores

Retail stores will be responsible for selling the majority of Vans products to consumers. Trade promotions and point of sale advertising will be utilised to help raise sales. The ‘Vans Concept Store’ will be opened as the home of Vans in New Zealand.

#### Trade promotions

Promotions will be targeted at both retail sales staff level and store level in an effort to increase Vans product sales.

- Sales staff would be measured on quarterly sales performances with product giveaways offered at progressive achievement levels. At the end of each quarter a major prize will be won by the countries leading salesperson with the main prize being won by the leading sales person at the end of each year. The main prize could be to win a trip for two to the ‘Bowl a Rama’ in Sydney.
- Retail stores will be offered a better wholesale price for larger orders. Vans will reward valued customers with sponsored outings.

- **Objectives:** To give retailers a reason to sell Vans, increasing product sales and developing brand loyalty among retailers.
- **Message:** The original action sports brand and leader in lifestyle fashion.
- **Timing:** Promotions will be launched pre-Christmas, and to snow industry retailers during the winter season.



### Point of sale advertising

Point of sale advertising will be utilised in-store to promote Vans products with product information cards which can be taken away, standout product display's, advertising posters and events calendars.

- **Objectives:** Engage consumers in store, encouraging product trial and brand recall, as well as promoting campaign activities
- **Message:** The original action sports brand and leader in lifestyle fashion.
- **Timing:** To be launched pre-Christmas, and in snow industry retailers during the winter season.





## Vans Concept Store

The ‘Vans Concept Store’ will be the flagship store, the jewel in Vans New Zealand crown, prominently located in downtown Auckland.

- Vans will be offering a consumer experience that no competing brand is offering in New Zealand. The ‘Vans Concept Store’ will have the most extensive range of Vans products available and employ knowledgeable ‘Enthusiasts’ as staff.
- The ‘Vans Concept Store’ will open with a Vans “Off The Wall” skate/BMX event, with live music and will introduce the Vans sponsored teams.
  - **Objectives:** To raise brand awareness and reinforce Vans brand positioning. To set the standard for lifestyle fashion brands in New Zealand.
  - **Message:** The original action sports brand and leader in lifestyle fashion, and leading brand with action sports athletes, enthusiasts and followers.
  - **Timing:** The store opening will be announced via the website, social media and magazine advertising at the campaign launch to create consumer buzz. The Store will open pre-Christmas, and will again be promoted through the website, social media and magazine advertising.



### 2.3.e Sponsorship

Vans ‘Off The Wall’ will expand Vans sponsorship reach by growing its athlete portfolio and investing in alternative sponsorship avenues including music, action sports events and parks, and youth TV presenters.

- Athlete sponsorship will be expanded in numbers and in sport genres to include skateboarding, BMX, motocross, snowboarding, surfing and wakeboarding athletes.
  - Existing action sports parks, tracks and slopes will be co-sponsored in key locations to raise brand awareness while developing brand loyalty.
  - Back up ‘Bowl a Rama’ by co-sponsoring major action sports events, as well as hosting Vans ‘Off The Wall’ events at co-sponsored local parks, tracks and slopes. Offer local ‘Enthusiasts’ the opportunity to meet and ride with the Vans Teams as well as providing live entertainment from up and coming youth bands.
  - Start to develop the positioning as a supporter of youth music and culture by actively supporting youth music events. Build towards sponsoring a stage at a major New Zealand music festival (such as Home Grown) dedicated to up and coming youth music acts. Aim ultimately towards developing a Vans ‘Off The Wall’ music and action sports festival. Potentially the New Zealand version of the Vans Warped Tour.
  - Sponsor presenters of niche youth music/lifestyle shows such as ULive with Vans footwear and apparel, and provide prizes for show competitions.
- **Objectives:** To build brand image while raising awareness and exposure at a local level. Develop a following of Vans athletes and events, developing brand loyalty.
  - **Message:** Supporter of youth culture, music, action sports and lifestyle and leading brand with action sports athletes, enthusiasts and followers.



- **Timing:** The sponsorship portfolio will start to be expanded from the campaign launch.

The First Vans “Off The Wall” sponsored action sports parks will be launched in the summer along with securing co-sponsorship of major action sports events, while running Vans “Off The Wall” events at local parks, and securing sponsorship of music events, aiming for the first stage sponsorship in the following summer. The first Vans ‘Off The Wall’ music and action sports festival may be an achievable year 5 objective.

Winter will see a focus on the sponsorship of snowboarding events.



## 2.4 Promotional Elements

As discussed earlier promotions will be targeted predominantly to the retailers. Vans objective is not to become the industry leader by price, but to become the industry leader by brand image and values.

By running promotional campaigns with retail stores Vans will build stronger relationships and brand loyalty among retailers down to sales staff level, increasing sales to consumers and at wholesale level.

The only promotion targeted directly to consumers will be bi-annual sales (pre Christmas and pre winter) of all inventory that is not sold to retailers during each quarterly season. This old stock will be offered via the online store only, at discounted prices in an effort to clear all old stock.

## 2.5 Campaign Timing

Vans “Off The Wall” is an ongoing all year round campaign. There is always something happening in an effort to maintain media presence, raise brand awareness, keep Vans at top of mind and develop brand loyalty.

The campaign timing will be aligned with key seasons in fitting with when the target market are starting to think about and participate in action sports, as well as over optimal shopping/purchasing periods, e.g. pre-Christmas.



The following chart outlines the initial 12 month campaign timing.

Creative Elements	Media Channel	Description/promotion	Implementation & Timing				
			Spring	Pre-Christmas	Summer	Winter	
Vans website	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revamped website goes live at campaign launch</li> </ul>	→				
Vans Customs	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launched with the website and promoted via FB, Twitter and magazine advertising</li> </ul>	→				
Online store	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launched with the website and promoted via FB, Twitter</li> <li>• Bi-annual inventory sale</li> <li>• Bi annual inventory sale</li> </ul>	→				
Create on Canvas	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competition launched and promoted via FB, Twitter and magazine advertising</li> </ul>		→			
Social media	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FB and Twitter pages go live</li> </ul>	→				
Smart phone apps	Mobile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apps go live, promoted via FB and Twitter</li> </ul>		→			
Printed advertising	Print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly catalogues in industry magazines featuring new season products</li> <li>• Magazine advertising will run as required</li> </ul>	→	→	→	→	
Trade promotions	Retail stores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotions launched in retail stores</li> <li>• Promotions launched in snow industry retail stores</li> </ul>		→			→



Creative Elements	Media Channel	Description/promotion	Implementation & Timing			
			Spring	Pre-Christmas	Summer	Winter
Point of sale advertising	Retail stores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launched in retail stores</li> <li>• Launched in snow industry retail stores</li> </ul>		→		
Vans Concept Store	Retail stores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Store announced at campaign launch via FB, Twitter and magazine advertising</li> <li>• Store opens, promoted via FB, Twitter and magazine advertising</li> </ul>	→	→		
Sponsorship of Athletes Parks	Sponsorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start to expand sponsorship portfolio</li> <li>• Start to secure co-sponsorship of action sports parks, tracks and slopes</li> </ul>	→			
Events		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch first Vans ‘Off The Wall’ action sports parks, tracks and slopes</li> <li>• Start to secure co-sponsorship of existing action sports events</li> </ul>			→	
Music		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host first Vans ‘Off The Wall’ events at local co-sponsored parks</li> <li>• Start to secure co-sponsorship of snowboarding events</li> </ul>			→	
TV personalities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start to secure sponsorship of youth music events</li> <li>• Start to secure clothing sponsorship of TV show hosts</li> </ul>	→			

(Figure 1: Vans 'Off The Wall' 12 month campaign timing)



### 3.0 Campaign Management Plan

The Vans ‘Off The Wall’ campaign management plan comprises of three key components; the campaign budget, measurement of objectives and the long-term strategy management.

#### 3.1 Campaign Budget

With the Vans ‘Off The Wall’ marketing campaign being a programmed long-term strategy incorporating many different elements such as athlete and event sponsorship, and ongoing print advertising, it is difficult to define a concrete campaign budget.

For the purpose of this report we will identify and estimate key costs associated with the first 12 months of the campaign as outlined in the previous section. The campaign costs would be expected to reduce significantly after the first year, once much of the campaign infrastructure is in place. Once the campaign has run for a full year the budget can then be re-assessed and set in accordance with the actual cost of some of the less obvious campaign elements.

Media Channel	Creative Element	Description	Budget
Online	Website, including the online store and Vans Customs	Development of the website plus the cost of 12 months support	<b>\$55,000</b>
	FB and Twitter Pages	Build the respective pages, to be managed internally by marketing team	<b>\$0.00</b>
Mobile	House Of Vans NZ smart phone app	Development of the app over three key smart phone platforms – iOS, Android and Windows plus the cost of 12 months support	<b>\$35,000</b>
Print	Vans Customs	Promotion of the new product through key action sports and youth lifestyle magazines	<b>\$5,000</b>



Print	Create On Canvas Competition	Promotion of the competition through key action sports and youth lifestyle magazines	<b>\$5,000</b>
	Vans Concept Store	Promotion of the up and coming store at campaign launch, and of the store opening pre-Christmas, through key action sports and youth lifestyle magazines	<b>\$15,000</b>
	Quarterly product catalogues	Promotion of new season products through key action sports and youth lifestyle magazines	<b>\$40,000</b>
	Vans sponsored action sports parks	Promoting the opening of the first sponsored parks through key action sports and youth lifestyle magazines	<b>\$5,000</b>
Retail Stores	Sales staff promotions	Cost of communication with stores as well as prizes	<b>\$20,000</b>
	Point of sale advertising	Product information cards, product display's, posters and events calendars	<b>\$20,000</b>
	Vans Concept Store	Cost of fitting out and stocking a store. Does not include cost of staff and rent	<b>\$150,000</b>
Sponsorship	Action sports athletes	Sponsorship of 18 athletes over 6 different sports	<b>100,000</b>
	Action sports parks	Co-sponsorship of 10 local parks around the country	<b>100,000</b>
	Action sports events	Vans ‘Off The Wall’ Co-sponsorship of 24 events around the country	<b>120,000</b>
	Music	Entry into sponsorship of music events, as well as key youth TV personalities	<b>30,000</b>
<b>Total 12 month budget</b>			<b>700,000</b>

(Figure 2: Vans 'Off The Wall' 12 month campaign budget)





### **3.2 Measurement Of Objectives**

The Vans ‘Off The Wall’ marketing campaign’s short-term objectives can be measured regularly by conducting market research to gauge the level of change in consumer perception and awareness of the Vans brand. Sales objectives are easily measured by simply analysing sales figures over a given period to calculate an increase or decline in sales.

New Zealand’s industry leader in action sports and lifestyle fashion is a difficult objective to measure, as this can be based on product sales and consumer perception as well as industry involvement and activity.

By analysing the market and secondary data (reports such as the annual “New Zealand Retail Market Analysis” for example) we are able to estimate Vans market share in the footwear and clothing industry. This can be measured annually and compared to previous years to give an overall picture of how well the Vans ‘Off The Wall’ campaign is converting marketing strategies into sales.

Observing what Vans competitors are doing with regards to promotions, sponsorship and their involvement in the action sports or music industry’s is a good measure of where Vans sits in the overall scope of things. If there is little activity seen from competitors, or their products are regularly discounted then one can safely assume that Vans is heading in the right direction to becoming New Zealand’s industry leader in action sports and lifestyle fashion.

### **3.3 Long-term Strategy Management**

As the Vans ‘Off The Wall’ marketing campaign is a long-term strategy it is important to keep it interesting, engaging and relevant to prevent wear-out. Vans must be constantly analysing and assessing the New Zealand Market as well as observing over seas trends in order to keep ahead of competitors, and ahead of the market.



In order to become a leader in the fashion industry it is important to constantly be introducing new products or styles into the market, or re-introducing popular styles from the past, as well as maintaining a media presence.

The brand that is the most active, the most engaging and the most relevant, as well as being seen to be the trendsetter will in turn be the industry leader.

## **Conclusion**

With Vans being such a leading global action sports and lifestyle brand, there is little mystery as to why this brand leadership is not apparent in the New Zealand market. Having no real presence in the market, Vans has become one of many similar brands offering similar products and services.

By implementing an effective marketing communications strategy, Vans will significantly expand its current market reach, opening new opportunities to interact with and engage the target audience, while building towards re-position the Vans brand as New Zealand’s industry leader in action sports and lifestyle fashion.

The Vans ‘Off The Wall’ marketing campaign is a comprehensive strategy covering all aspects of the planning, implementation and management processes.

Before undergoing such a campaign it is essential that further research be undertaken to determine more accurately the market dimensions, as well as further understanding Vans target audience and brand positioning.

With the right attitude, the right passion, and strong leadership, Vans have the opportunity to implement a marketing communications strategy with the potential to not only re-position itself in the New Zealand market, but to lead the action sports and youth lifestyle industry’s long into the future.



## Reference Note

This report is based upon the findings and thinking discussed in parts 1 & 2 of this series of three reports. (Messenger, Target Market Analysis - VANS, New Zealand, 2011) (Messenger, VANS Creative Brief, 2011)



## References

**Messenger, C.** (2011). *Target Market Analysis - VANS, New Zealand*. Unitec, Auckland, New Zealand.

**Messenger, C.** (2011). *VANS Creative Brief*. Unitec, Auckland, New Zealand.

**Van Doran, S.** (2008, March 24). *Vans Off The Wall*. Retrieved October 25, 2011 from <http://thevansblog.blogspot.com/2008/03/ask-steve-van-doren.html>

