TARGETING THE ASPIRATIONAL CORE

The Aspirational Core is a unique target segment for the outdoor industry in that they have high aspirations to be core outdoor enthusiasts even though they aren’t acting that way in their participation. In practice, their skills are more moderate, but they fully buy into the extreme outdoor lifestyle, which means they need the products to at least play the part. Their desire to engage with the industry at a higher level can be a real opportunity if their lifestyle barriers, such as access and storage, can be addressed.
WHO THEY ARE
WISHING FOR ADVENTURE

Fifty-one percent of The Aspirational Core is under 34, but they have family and work responsibilities more like those of their older counterparts. Primarily young professional males with families in or near big cities, they seek occasional adventures and thrills to offset their grounded and routine lives. In their day-to-day, they spend their time outdoors running, biking, playing with their kids, and engaged in team sports. They are motivated to get outside for the exercise, to challenge themselves and for an opportunity to socialize with others, and they tend to specialize in a few activities rather than participate in a wide range of activities, like The Achiever and The Outdoor Native.

THE ASPIRATIONAL CORE

IS:
ADVENTUROUS | EXTREME IN MENTALITY | SOCIAL | FASHION-FOCUSED

ISN’T:
NATURE-ORIENTED | EXTREME IN PRACTICE | PARTICIPATING ALONE | INVESTING IN TECHNICAL FEATURES

14% OF OUTDOOR CONSUMERS

43%^ FEMALE
57%* MALE
51%* BETWEEN AGES 18-34
45% HAVE CHILDREN AT HOME

59% CAUCASIAN
8% ASIAN

$74,600 AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME
31% LIVE IN SUBURBS NEAR A MAJOR CITY
The Aspirational Core feels that any activity is more enjoyable when done outside. They look for opportunities to get out and explore, but time and distance often keep their activities closer to home. Often driven by adrenaline and improving their personal performance, they work to take their activities to the next level and leverage the knowledge of a professional to help them meet their personal goals.

Fitness-oriented in their approach to participation, they often train indoors at gyms to help get into better shape for their outdoor activities, such as races and fitness events.

More often than not, The Aspirational Core consumer is taking a middle-of-the-road approach to their outdoor activities and keeping them close-to-home. Jogging, playing, commuting, and shorter-distance races keep them happy and healthy. They live for the occasional outdoor adventure—the annual ski trip or the summer whitewater rafting trip—which is thrilling to them.
PRODUCTS THEY LIKE
BRANDS THEY USE IN THE OUTDOORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nike</td>
<td>53%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakley</td>
<td>14%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GoPro</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OTHER
URBAN OUTFITTERS | BILLABONG | GOLITE | LULULEMON

- WANT QUALITY GEAR, TAILORED TO SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES
- WILLING TO PAY MORE FOR THINGS THAT MAKES THEM LOOK ATHLETIC
- FAR MORE CONCERNED WITH STYLE RATHER THAN FUNCTION WHEN SHOPPING FOR THE OUTDOORS
- WOULD RATHER RENT OR BORROW EQUIPMENT FOR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES THAN OWN IT

Even though The Aspirational Core likes to be seen wearing brands associated with the outdoors, the brands they use are more athletic- or yoga-focused, like Nike, Lululemon and Athleta. They want quality products that get the job done for their select activities and are drawn to products that work together in an integrated system for a seamless experience outdoors.

Prioritizing style over functional, they seek out “entry-level” apparel from outdoor brands. Because they don’t participate in most traditional activities often enough to justify top-of-the-line, oftentimes they will rent or borrow better gear to avoid the commitment of owning.
Driven by the need for quality gear and the desire to fit in at an entry-level, The Aspirational Core frequently shops outdoor specialty outlet stores. Their shopping style is more methodical and less impulsive than the average outdoor consumer’s. When shopping for gear, they do their research in advance online and shop at brick and mortar with a specific need in mind.

The Aspirational Core wants the retail environment to be an extension of the outdoors, with in-store displays that inspire them to get outside and try new activities. Although somewhat price-sensitive, they look for retailers that offer rental programs so they can use quality products to help push their performance—but not at a premium. Mobile-friendly retailers are also an important feature they look for.

Peer opinion has an influence on their purchase decisions, as they are willing to pay more for a product that someone they know has worn or has recommended to them.
HOW THEY USE TECHNOLOGY

For The Aspirational Core, technology is an important tool for staying connected and enhancing their outdoor experiences. They use Facebook for sharing their experiences, YouTube for product reviews and Google for doing product research and comparison shopping. They spend most of their leisure time with media browsing the Internet and watching live TV.

AVERAGE HOURS PER WEEK SPENT ON THE FOLLOWING MEDIA:
- Browsing the Internet: 11.09 HOURS
- Watching live TV: 10.64 HOURS
- Email or text messaging: 5.95 HOURS
- Listening to music or podcasts: 5.05 HOURS
- Watching time-shifted TV (online, DVR–recorded shows): 4.97 HOURS
- Listening to the radio: 4.89 HOURS
- Using smartphone apps: 4.67 HOURS
- Playing video games: 3.50 HOURS
- Streaming movies: 3.08 HOURS
- Reading print magazines or newspapers: 2.26 HOURS

INTERNET SITES USED ON A REGULAR BASIS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Usage</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FACEBOOK</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>USE IT Socially, Less likely to use it to share photos and videos of their outdoor activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOOGLE</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>Compare prices of outdoor products, Discover new places to engage in my outdoor activities*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOUTUBE</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>Learn a new outdoor activity, Find inspiration for a new outdoor activity, Experience the outdoors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWITTER</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSTAGRAM</td>
<td>27%*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONLINE RETAILERS</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PINTEREST</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONLINE FORUMS</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONLINE MAGAZINES</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ONLINE COMMUNITIES</td>
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*// denotes values higher/lower than all outdoor consumers at a 95% level of confidence.
STRATEGIES FOR TARGETING THE ASPIRATIONAL CORE

As outliers looking for opportunity to join the core, The Aspirational Core is a promising segment that requires brands and retailers to implement some subtle shifts to their business strategies to meet their needs and make them feel welcomed by the industry.

The following are some thought starters to help you begin thinking about ways your company can most effectively target the Aspirational Core.
ESTABLISH BRAND RELEVANCY:
FRIENDLY ADVENTURE
Relevance with The Aspirational Core requires a delicate balance between the lifestyle they aspire to and the realities of their outdoor abilities. Attainable inspiration, reassuring expertise and accessible opportunities are all key connection points with The Aspirational Core.

MESSAGING:
BE GROUNDED AND APPROACHABLE, while conveying a sense of thrill and adventure—this is the kind of brand or business they want to associate themselves with.

TALK TO THEM—it’s the best way to understand how to appeal to them. The ConsumerVue Segment ID Survey can help you identify consumers who are The Aspirational Core, and you can conduct your own survey or mini focus groups with them.

APPEAL TO THEIR ACTIVE SPIRIT and desire for a healthier lifestyle and greater physical performance.

PROMOTE CLOSE-TO-HOME ADVENTURES that make an active outdoor lifestyle feel accessible to them.

CLOSE-TO-HOME ADVENTURE
UTAH
Campaign around accessible epic adventures in your backyard.
FOCUS ON STYLE:
OUTDOOR GEAR CAN BE STYLISH AND FUNCTIONAL
The Aspirational Core is more influenced by style, low-end technical features, promotions and price than over claims around performance or relationships with professional athletes.

PRODUCT:
OFFER STYLISH SOLUTIONS in the activities they participate in—running (road and trail), hiking, camping, biking (road and mountain), team sports and CrossFit.

MERCHANDISING:
SPOTLIGHT ACTIVITY-SPECIFIC STARTER KITS that include all of the necessary apparel and gear to be successful in a particular activity.

DISPLAY HOW BRAND-SPECIFIC PRODUCTS CAN WORK TOGETHER for ease of use outdoors (e.g., a fleece vest that clips into a jacket that fits over a helmet).

MARKETING:
PROMOTE “ENTRY-LEVEL” APPAREL AND GEAR with a focus on style and low-end technical features.

MESSAGE SEASONAL DISCOUNTS AND PROMOTIONS throughout the year that target specific activity apparel, footwear and gear.

TAKE A HEALTHY, ACTIVE LIFESTYLE APPROACH to getting outdoors which aligns with their day-to-day outdoor attitudes.

PROVIDE SOLUTIONS THAT FIT THEIR LIFESTYLE NEEDS—transitioning from indoor to outdoor activities, supporting technology, participating in family-focused settings.

SERVICES:
OFFER A SUBSCRIPTION MODEL that highlights a specific activity each month and provides apparel and even tips from guides or professionals to help them meet their personal performance goals.

FOR THOSE CORE CONSUMERS WITH ASPIRATIONAL CORE FRIENDS, develop a “share with a friend” incentive program that offers discounts for both parties to purchase.
ADDRESS THE BARRIERS:
SOLUTIONS THAT BUILD AFFINITY

Brands or businesses that can address The Aspirational Core barriers (e.g., being limited by location, new activity intimidation and lack of expertise) through targeted products and services will build lasting relationships with them.

SERVICES:
OFFER IN-STORE COURSES TO INTRODUCE THEM TO NEW ACTIVITIES or help them master existing ones.

ESTABLISH A RENTAL PROGRAM so they can demo higher-quality gear for a specific activity without the upfront commitment.

PARTNER WITH RENTAL SHOPS to offer discounted rental packages.

PROVIDE ACCESS (IN-PERSON OR ONLINE) to local guides or professionals for them to tap as a resource.

EVENTS:
FEED THEIR THRILL-SEEKING SPIRIT by hosting local events that offer intermediate-level activities and provide close-to-home adventure and exploration.

HOST OR PARTICIPATE IN ANNUAL SALES EVENTS to accommodate their promotional-driven mindset without ongoing discounting.

SHOW UP WHERE THEY ARE—parks, gyms, races—even if it’s as simple as handing out flyers on a special offering or promotion.

MARKETING:
SPOTLIGHT YOUR PRODUCTS IN PHOTOGRAPHY of local and close-to-home locations and activities to inspire them to visit and use.
IN-STORE/ONLINE:
SPEAK TO THEIR DESIRE FOR OUTDOOR INSPIRATION in-store by capturing the essence of the outdoors in the store through product displays, interactive product testing features (e.g., rain room, bike rocks, rock wall), music and videos.

SUPPORT THEIR RESEARCH EFFORTS with in-store and online consumer product reviews and price-comparison tools.

OFFER RESOURCES TO HELP THEM DISCOVER and explore new places that are close-to-home.

IN-STORE EXPERIENCE
PACK & PADDLE
Interactive display featuring backpack packing, water filtration and camp stove demo stations.

PRICE COMPARISON TOOL
FABLETICS
Price compares their apparel against competitors (coincidently, the same brands that The Aspirational Core associates with most for outdoors).

YOU’LL NEVER BUY $100 PANTS AGAIN
DOUBLE DUTY ACTIVEWEAR AT HALF THE PRICE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CAMI</th>
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<tr>
<td>FABLETICS</td>
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<td>$79.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIKE</td>
<td>$89.00</td>
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DISCOVER NEW PLACES
ROOTSRATED.COM
Online choose-your-own-adventure service, with close-to-home recommendations and reviews by locals and professionals.
CONNECT THROUGH TECH: BEST WAY TO REACH THEM

Technology plays a strong role in The Aspirational Core’s life, both indoor and outside. It is a resource for outdoor inspiration, a shopping companion and an outlet for sharing achievements. Look to align your efforts with their tech usage to better meet their needs and have a presence in all aspects of their online usage.

SALES:
DRIVE AWARENESS THROUGH PRODUCT PLACEMENT in “softer” channels such as rental shops and mainstream sporting good retailers like Dick’s Sporting Goods and Sports Authority.

PROVIDE SEAMLESS SHOPPING EXPERIENCES whenever possible with a mobile-friendly website or branded app.

BECOME TOP-OF-MIND DURING THE RESEARCH PROCESS with shopable ads on product review and video sites (e.g. Google, YouTube).

SPEAK TO THEIR PRICE-CONSCIOUS SIDE, and create a loyalty program where they can earn rewards or receive VIP benefits. If you want to drive them to retail, create a loyalty program that rewards more points for shopping in-store than online.

MARKETING:
BE VERY ACTIVE ON YOUR OWN SOCIAL CHANNELS, especially Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Google, where the majority of them spend their time.

FACEBOOK—POST LIFESTYLE-RELEVANT VISUALS, and ask questions versus posting statements in order to engage them. Be consistent and timely with responses. Make sure to include a link to your website.

INSTAGRAM—ENCourage your community to share their outdoor story using a brand-specific hashtag. Engage with photos in that stream, and repost the best images.

YOUTUBE—USE VIDEOS TO CREATE AN ENRICHED STORYTELLING EXPERIENCE. Use strategic, relevant keywords in both your title and description to increase searchability, and share videos across all social channels to maximize cross-channel visibility.