AN INDUSTRY STORY

63.4M HIKERS IN 2024

VASQUE?



SIXTY YEARS ON THE TRAIL. GONE FROM THE SHELF.

THE REPLACEMENT

BREEZE LT NTX

Teej

THE STORY IN FIVE NUMBERS

AT A GLANCE

60 YRS

Vasque, maker of the Sundowner, shut down in October 2024.

63.4M

Americans went hiking in 2024: a record high, and nearly double 2012.

+83%

Hoka's net sales growth, fiscal 2023 to 2026. The footwear dollars moved.

$78.8B

Projected resale and repair market by 2030. Durability ahead of its time?

$22B+

National Park Service maintenance backlog in 2024. Trail use is outgrowing its infrastructure.



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SWIPE FOR THE ANSWERS

KEY QUESTIONS



1. HOW DOES A 60-YEAR-OLD BOOT BRAND FAIL IN THE MIDDLE OF A RECORD HIKING BOOM?

2. IF HIKERS DIDN'T LEAVE THE TRAIL, WHERE DID THE FOOTWEAR DOLLARS GO?

3. WAS VASQUE'S DURABILITY-FIRST INSTINCT WRONG, OR JUST EARLY?

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RED WING SAID

"Consumers have shifted from traditional hiking activities to a broader set of casual outdoor activities."

— RED WING, VIA SGB MEDIA

THE DATA SAYS

HIKING IS AT A RECORD HIGH. WHAT SHRANK WAS DEMAND FOR THE SPECIFIC PRODUCT VASQUE KEPT BUILDING.

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THE NUMBERS DON'T BLAME THE HIKERS

HIKING ITSELF IS AT A RECORD HIGH

2012



2024 IS ABOUT 2X 2012

EACH ICON ≈ 6M U.S. HIKERS

2024



13M+ SINCE 2019

63.4M

U.S. HIKERS, 2024

20.5% OF AMERICANS AGE 6+

SOURCE: OIA

CORE HIKERS (13+ OUTINGS A YEAR)

BUT THE AVERAGE OUTDOOR PARTICIPANT LOGS ABOUT 5 FEWER OUTINGS A YEAR THAN PRE-PANDEMIC.

+7.6%

A YEAR · 5-YEAR AVERAGE



VS. 5.2% A YEAR FOR ALL HIKING

SOURCE: OIA (OUTINGS: ALL OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES)

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THE FOOTWEAR DOLLARS WENT TO A DIFFERENT SHOE

12 MONTHS THROUGH APRIL 2023

SOURCE: SGB / CIRCANA



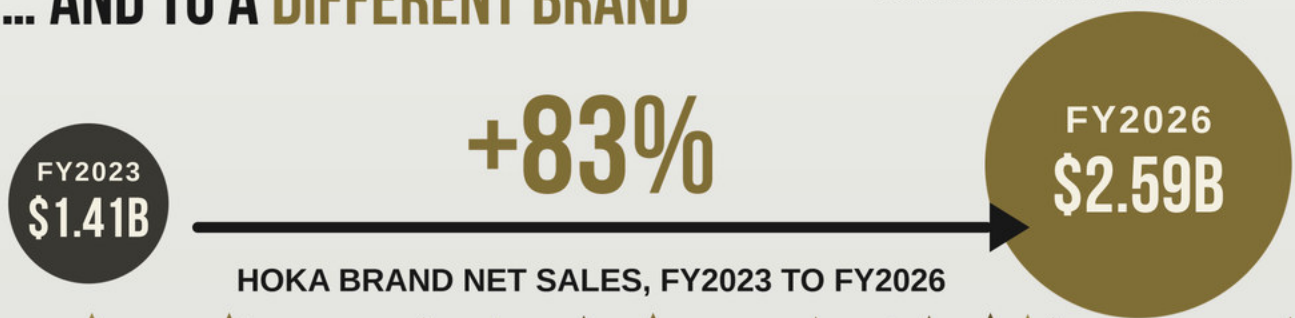
12 MONTHS THROUGH MARCH 2025

SOURCE: CIRCANA VIA SHOP EAT SURF OUTDOOR



… AND TO A DIFFERENT BRAND

SOURCE: DECKERS BRANDS



Sources: OIA · SGB Media / Circana · Shop Eat Surf Outdoor · Deckers Brands. Periods differ and are noted per chart.

Teej

FIVE TAKEAWAYS

WHY IT MATTERS



1. PARTICIPATION ISN'T THE SAME AS PROVIDER SUCCESS.
2. A SHIFT TOWARD CONVENIENCE, NOT AWAY FROM DURABILITY.
3. THE RESALE DATA COMPLICATES THE OBVIOUS TAKEAWAY.
4. RECORD TRAIL USE IS OUTPACING THE INFRASTRUCTURE BUILT TO SUPPORT IT.
5. LEGACY BRANDS FAIL FOR STANDING STILL, NOT FOR HAVING HISTORY.

Teej

THE LINE THAT STUCK

PEOPLE DIDN'T LEAVE THE TRAIL. THEY LEFT THIS BOOT BEHIND.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

THE PERSON BEHIND THE STORY

Teej Thaldorf is a pragmatic program & category manager with more than 10 years in omnichannel consumer retail. Early in his career he worked in outdoor specialty at Eastern Mountain Sports where he sold Vasque boots in the 1990s. He still wears the brand and writes from Minnesota about how brands navigate market challenge & opportunity.

READ THE FULL STORY LINK IN THE FIRST COMMENT ↓

YOUR TURN

What piece of gear did you never find a replacement for?

Teej