

# Current marketing situation polar electro



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Polar Electro sees its mission as being able to provide people with the best solution to achieve their personal well-being, sports, and performance goals. The company exists to improve people's quality of life by generating innovative, high-quality, and user friendly products. The Polar brand's essence is captured in the statement that "Polar is the leading brand and true partner in improving human health and well being through its understanding of personal physiology and environment." Physiology refers to the monitoring of the heart, and environment refers to the measurement of altitude, direction, speed, distance, and temperature. (Polar Electro Main Website)

## CURRENT MARKETING SITUATION

Polar Electro, Inc. develops heart rate monitoring and fitness assessment solutions to enable individuals to improve their fitness level and sports performance. It offers Polar Equine heart rate monitors that measure horse's exertion levels during exercise, and monitor resting and recovery heart rates as well. They offer accessories, training software for heart rate monitor users, and training computers for physical education solutions to students and teachers. The company also offers Polar contact heart rate systems and Polar wireless heart rate systems for original equipment manufacturers. Its heart rate monitoring and analyzing technology is used by researchers in the fields of sports, exercise, and health; and for the activity measurement of walking, weight loss, fitness, strength training, running, cycling, and multisport activities. The company serves fitness facilities, athletic teams, corporate wellness facilities, health insurance providers, and physical education programs around the world. Polar Electro, Inc. markets its

products through retail stores. The company is based in Lake Success, New York. Polar Electro, Inc. operates as a subsidiary of Polar Electro Fin.

(Company Overview Polar Electro, Inc)

## **Market Description**

The market can be divided into two types of fitness monitors: Heart Rate Monitors and Speed and Distance Monitors.

### **Heart Rate Monitors**

The heart rate monitor (HRMs) market is very diverse. For all that you do to keep your body in shape you should consider tracking how your heart performs and using some kind of heart rate monitor is a necessary and useful tool. Whether you're a hiker, cyclist, runner, tri athlete, cross fitter, climber or back country skier, there is an ideal fitness monitor to accomplish your goals. HRMs help you stay within your target heart rate zone and help you assess the effectiveness of the training conducted. HRMs are wrist mounted information stations that provide data within your eyesight to guide you towards your specific goals. They use personal data such as age, gender, weight, and resting heart rate to calculate aerobic heart rate target zones and to help you maintain your optimal training level during exercise. They also provide immediate feedback, allowing you to adjust your training based on your performance. Lastly, most HRMs provide sports watch features to include a stopwatch, countdown timer, water resistance, and also have a clock and calendar.

There are two types of HRMs. One type includes a chest strap and the other is strapless. Strapless HRMs offer touch pads on the monitors to measure

heart rate. Users must pause during activity in order to get a proper measurement. They are estimated to be 95% accurate using some type of finger sensor. Coded chest strap monitors require a separate wireless chest strap to monitor the heart. The chest straps gauge your hearts impulses continuously, providing a very accurate reading. The Chest strap sends a coded signal to a sports wristwatch computer using ANT+ technology which ensures the data you receive is from your chest strap.

## **Speed and Distance Monitors**

Speed and distance monitors are specialized HRMs that also measure how far and how fast you are moving during training. Most models interface with a computer, allowing you to go online, get directions, log your experience, and keep track of your performance. Various technologies are used to calculate your speed and distance that you've traveled. Most units use a satellite-tracking GPS technology, while others use an accelerometer, which tracks user's movement using varying degrees of electrical current within the unit sensor. Tracking the electrical current allows the unit to detect different levels of acceleration, speed and distance which may be in the monitor or the foot pod that attaches to your shoe. GPS technology only works in outdoor training, while the accelerometer and the foot pod are best used indoors.

## **Product Review**

Polar Electro's line of fitness monitors are divided into three categories: Getting Active, Improving Fitness, and Maximizing Performance offering the following:

Getting Active products are introductory products that provide basic features for new enthusiasts. The product lines goal is to show the owner how well they are doing, and let them focus on enjoying being active. (Polar Electro Main Website)

The Polar FT1 is one of Polar Electro's entries in the getting active product line. It is a reliable heart rate monitor for the price. It displays average and maximum heart rates in addition to manual target zones, and the chest strap is coded to prevent interference from other exercisers. The Polar FT1 is simple and easy to use, and not as bulky as some units. Even though it doesn't track calories burned, consumers say the Polar FT1 provides accurate heart-rate readings without breaking the bank. A downfall: the monitor must be sent to an authorized service center for a replacement battery at the consumer's expense. The one-button design, which you have to repeatedly push to navigate the menu, can become annoying over time.

Improving Fitness products are products offered to those consumers that already believe that fitness is a part of their life. These products provide features that will assist them in getting to a higher level of fit. Whatever the goal is: to get fitter, to lose weight, or for the self satisfaction that comes from getting faster or moving further. These products are designed to fit into your weekly routine. They also offer a way for you to see your tracked improvement after each session with polarpersonaltrainer. com. (Polar Electro Main Website)

The Polar FT60 is probably overkill for most exercisers, but they do more than simply track heart rates. It's has a virtual personal trainer that provides

personalized information you can apply to your workouts. The included fitness program creates target heart-rate zones based on your current fitness level, and it tells you when you are training too hard or not hard enough. The Polar FT60 is difficult to set up initially, but the various training features and reliable monitoring make it a good buy. Consumers say it's easy to review your workout data, and a replaceable battery is another plus. However, while many other Polar monitors include a way to upload your workout data to a computer, you'll have to buy an optional Flow Link device (\*Est. \$55) to get that functionality with the Polar FT60. The backlit display can also be difficult to read in certain lighting conditions.

Maximizing Performance products are products offered to those consumers that are serious about their performance. Polar provides these consumers with features to push them to the top of their game; these products are targeted for the elite athletes. These products help make sure the consumers fulfill their potential in every session, challenging the consumer to achieve by beating their personal best. (Polar Electro Main Website)

### **Heart Rate Monitor Features:**

Heart Rate Target Zone Settings: Polar HRMs offer the ability to exercise for a sustained period within your target zone. It is recommended that you consult with a physician to determine your optimal training heart rate.

Exercising in your target zone maximizes heart conditioning and safety. Polar HRMs keep you in tune via digital display and/or audio alarms when you are above or below your desired zone.

Time in target zone: Tracks how to monitor the effectiveness of your workouts.

Calorie counter: Tracks calories burned during workouts. It is a tool that is useful to consumers that have weight loss as an important goal.

Personal computer interface: Some HRMs offer the ability to store training information directly to the computer to download statistics for analysis and storage. Some HRMs offer a wireless interface that offers the transfer of information through your network.

Fitness tracker: This feature monitors all of your activity through the accelerometer and includes software that enables you to download the data.

Mounting: HRMs can be worn on your wrist or attached to a bike handlebar.

### **Speed and Distance Monitor Features:**

Target pace and alarm: This feature helps you reach speed and distance goals with a pacing function. Consumers would set an alarm that alerts the user when his or her pace slows.

Altitude Tracking: Provides an estimate of the peak altitude you have traveled during a workout. It also supplies total elevation gain or loss during workout.

Running route/elevation profile: Provides a chart or map showing the ascents and descents of the route traveled during the workout.

Music player: Provides a smart music player that allows you to download music providing you personalized soundtracks for your workouts. It figures

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out which songs improve your speed and increase calories burned. Those tracks are then compiled to form your high-performance playlist. An audio coach informs you of your pace, split times and other performance indicators through the included headphones. You can listen to your music anytime or tune into a favorite local station via the built-in FM tuner.

## **Competitive Review**

### **Timex**

Timex Group designs, manufacturers and markets innovative timepieces and jewelry globally. It was founded in 1854 and has expanded to become Timex Group. For over 150 years, Timex has offered innovative, well designed and reliable timepieces with style among its Fashion, Sports and Outdoor lines, and has sold more than one billion watches. The Timex Group companies market global brands including Timex, Versace, Valentino, Salvatore Ferragamo, Guess, GC, Vincent Berard, Versus, TX, Marc Ecko, Nautica and Opex. Timex has 5000 employees worldwide that are providing watches in more than 100 countries and it has manufacturing and distribution facilities in 20 countries. Timex manufactures GPS enabled watches, heart rate monitor watches and similar high tech devices. (Case Study on Timex)

Branching out from its original “ takes a licking” designs, Timex is strapping on fresh faces so it can tap new markets worldwide. The nation’s largest watch manufacturer has expanded its lines from simple, low-cost watches to include high-tech tickers capable of paging or downloading computer data. Its sports watches have gone upscale with its Expedition line of watches. Lastly, the Ironman line offers fitness enthusiast many options and many



price points to begin a fitness quest. The company also makes and markets thermostats, pedometers, and weather instruments.

### **Nike + Product line:**

Nike + was a vision almost 30 years in the making. The original concept was called the Nike Monitor, and it was Nike's first attempt outside of shoes. The monitor would tell runners how far and how fast they had run. It was constructed as a brown plastic box, emblazoned with Nike's iconic Swoosh logo. It was clunky, the size of a thick paperback book, with a waist strap and two ports on the front that look like miniature speakers, lending it the air of a shrunken mid-'80s boom box. (McClusky, 2009)

Fast forward to the present, Nike + offers a full product line of Fitness monitors to include The SportWatch GPS, the FuelBand and the SportBand that connect to your computer with the built-in USB or the included USB that automatically sends the data, including start time, duration, and distance, to the Nike+ servers, formatted in a specially structured XML file that can also be read by third-party and open source apps. However, the FuelBand also has Bluetooth pairing to mobile phones for use with the Nike+ FuelBand app for iOS 5.

iPhone/iTouch and iPod nano are compatible and used with the Nike + line. The iPhone/iTouch use the iTunes library that can record workouts and the iPod nano needs a additional adaptor sold separately that does the same thru the iTunes library.

## **Garmin**

The No. 1 U. S. navigation device maker has been seeing particularly strong demands for its fitness products, as athletes and joggers spend more on watches with GPS sensors, golfing accessories with preloaded courses and fitness apps. (Bangalore, 2012)

Garmin Fit is an app available with your Android phone that turns your phone into a powerful training tool. The consumer can see their current walking, running or cycling stats at a glance or review them later thanks to automatic uploading to Garmin Connect. It even allows you to select the perfect soundtrack for your workout. (Google Play Apps Store)

## **Channels and Logistics Review**

Polar Electro will depend heavily on select sporting good stores to offer Polar Electro HRMs, Speed and Distance Monitors, and Accessories. Polar Electro will also rely on online sales worldwide as the other distribution channel.

### **STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, and THREAT ANALYSIS**

Polar electro has several strengths that have set them up to be successful and a few weaknesses that are costing them time as the industry's quality leader. Major opportunities include growing the military/government market and continued education of the consumer market. Threats include limited resources to compete with industry leaders.

## **Strengths**

Polar Electro can rely on the following strengths:

Superior quality: At Polar Electro's core, it is a technology company that conducts research and develops new technology solutions. This background allows Polar Electro to offer well engineered solutions to consumers and businesses concerns.

Superior customer service: After sale service is essential to Polar Electro's success in the fitness business. Most of the devices are complicated pieces of technology, and consumers often need support in installing software updates or setting up data transfer between the devices and the PC. Polar Electro's objective is to provide answers to consumers or retailers questions or concerns within 12 hours.

Centralized research and development: Polar spends 10% of its sales on research and development, which takes place mostly in Oulu, Finland. The company benefits from the supply of high quality engineers from the University of Oulu.

Customer loyalty: Once a consumer purchases polar products they usually stay with the polar brand products. When Polar Electro's consumers upgrade to another HRM or Speed and Distance Monitor those consumers pass the old product to family and friends. Polar counts on its superior customer service to keep customers happy.

Accessories: Polar offers quality accessories that work hand and hand with HRMs and Speed and Distance monitors to include: bike mounts, Flow link Data Transfer Units, and Polar WearLink+ Transmitter Nike+ Strap.

## **Weaknesses**

Discretionary items: HRMs, and Speed and Distance Monitors are not considered necessary for survival. As items that are nice to have, it is hard to justify the purchase of HRMs, and Speed and Distance Monitors during hard economic times. Consumers spend less on items like Polar products in hard economic times.

Centralized research and development: Having most research and development conducted in Oulu, Finland does not allow Polar Electro's local markets to capitalize on opportunities unique to that specific market.

Low turnover of products: Polar Electro products are high quality, and rarely replaced. When consumers that own Polar products purchase new products they pass on the old product to friends and family.

Over engineered web site: Polar Electro's PolarPersonalTrainer. com website was created by the engineers in Oulu, Finland. It is specific to polar products only. If one of Polar Electro's partners' products tries to access this, site they are denied access.

## **Opportunities**

Target more niches: Polar Electro's success will be judged on what niches it succeeds in establishing. Polar Electro needs to figure out how to expand on its partnership with military because the cultures of most branches in the military are natural partners to Polar Electro.

Growing market: The Fitness market grew 24 % in 2011 and made over 300 million dollars in sales as well. It is predicted for the next three years that double digit growth is the norm.

Health trends: As baby boomers continue to retire and desire to enjoy full, healthy, and active lives in retirement, Polar Electro products need to be available. Polar does a great job in educating all on the benefits of healthy hearts. This effort must continue because Polar products are not marketed on television.

Logical partnerships: Polar Electro should consider partnerships with all brands of athletic shoes a long-term goal. Another partnership that should be expanded on is with Apple.

Polar Electro should ensure that most of Polar Electro's products work with all major brands of fitness equipment. This would allow, Polar Electro to follow-up and offer Polar Electro products at health clubs and gyms of Polar Electro's choosing.

## **Threats**

Competition: Nike, Garmin, and Timex see the HRM and Speed and Distance Monitor market as a market they can dominate. Polar Electro is not big enough to compete with any of them head to head. Polar Electro must continue to do what they do well which is ?. Competitors may make cheaper, simpler devices and capture market share.

Consumer/Social: Products may be too complex for some consumers.

Economic: Personal debts of people coupled with hard times may leave little or no disposable income to purchase leisure products.

## **OBJECTIVES and ISSUES**

### **Objectives**

Polar Electro needs to adjust its marketing plan regarding the Baby Boomer generation of people ages 50 to 65. The plan needs to highlight how polar products can assist in maintaining a full, productive, fit, and enjoyable retirement. A continued investment in educating this target market is required.

Polar Electro also needs to penetrate the military market further. Introducing speed and distance monitors particularly and HRMs to military personnel would guarantee a lifetime of consumer loyalty. This is a large population whose physical fitness is a priority in their missions and lifestyles. Polar Electro's marketers should consider offering products to active duty military personnel at half price and providing 25% discounts to military personnel's immediate family members. This initial penetration along with Polar Electro's superior after sale customer support would pay for itself in the USA within 3 years.

### **Issues**

Polar Electro must defend its brand and image against the patent dispute filed in May of 2012 against Polar Electro, Strava, Garmin, FitnessKeepers and MapMyFitness. Icon Health & Fitness took legal action against the top five developers of mobile and online-fitness related applications, claiming

the process of uploading and storing exercise data infringes on two of its patents. (Formosa, 2012)

## **Marketing Strategy**

Polar Electro USA's marketing strategy involves penetrating the identified niches in more depth. Positioning will remain providing consumers healthy, quality products that help them maintain productive lives. The primary target segments are Baby Boomers and Generation Xers. The Baby Boomer generation is comprised of soon to retire and retired adults ages 50 to 65 and the Generation Xers are younger adults ages 30 to 46. Polar Electro will target both segments of these athletes who are health conscious and socially responsible consumers. (Gary M. Armstrong, 2013)

## **Positioning**

Polar Electro USA has established the brand of Polar Electro's products as the superior quality products offered that provide great after sale support. This positioning strategy must be maintained because Polar has successfully connected with these consumers and do not want to lose them. Populations in Western Europe, Japan and the USA are aging, and the elderly want to stay active and healthy to lead rewarding lives after retirement. They are their main target. Obesity is also a concern in North America and Western Europe. This is their secondary target.

## **Product Strategy**

Polar Electro products will be sold with varying degrees of the features described in the Product Review section. The three categories: Getting

Active, Improving Fitness, and Maximizing Performance cover the whole scope of the HRM and Speed and Distance Monitor market.

## **Pricing**

The pricing strategy at Polar Electro appears to be; quality is not cheap. As long Polar Electro's products continue to be engineered with consumers in mind they will get through tough economic times.

## **Distribution Strategy**

Based on the information in the Channels and Logistics Review, Polar Electro will employ a selective distribution strategy with well known sporting goods stores, select health clubs, marathons, tour de France, and other biathlons and triathlons.

## **Marketing Communication Strategy**

The marketing communication strategy for Polar Electro allows polar products to compete with Nike, Garmin and Timex. Polar does not support television advertisement. Polar Electro's marketing mix consists of digital media and print advertisement. (Jackson, 2012)

## **Marketing Research**

To write this paper on my assessment of Polar Electro USA, I conducted a phone interview with the Vice President of Marketing (Jackson, 2012). I conducted an email survey sent out at random to 25 people I know. The results of my email survey provided the following results:

Generation Xers and Baby Boomers desire tools that inform them of progress during workouts.



Generation Xers and Baby Boomers would desire to record the results if the data storage offered, was easy to analyze and easy to upload.

Generation Xers that have not practiced fitness consistently in the recent past need an initial push to get started again. I perceive this as an opportunity to recruit new consumers.

## **Summary/Action Plan**

Because Polar Electro is a private company, developing a concise action plan without having real updated information is not realistic. I can say that Polar Electro has many of the ingredients to grow and become a truly global company. It is a technology company that processes research and development and manufacturing centrally, and it has access to a highly skilled workforce. Polar Electro's biggest challenge is choosing which new business area opportunities to pursue with the limited resources available.

### POLAR SURVEY

What is your age (It will not be used against you)?

What is your gender? Male or Female

What is your height in feet and inches?

What is your weight in English pounds?

How much stress is in your life? LOW or MED or HIGH

How would you rate your eating habits on a healthy scale? EXCELLENT or GOOD or OK or BAD

Are you a healthy, fit, adult (In your opinion)? YES or NO

Do you workout more than 3 times a week? YES or NO

Do you log your results in some way? YES or No

Do you do a Cardio workout more than twice a week? YES or NO

Why do you workout?

If you track the results of your workout, what do you use?

ie: Nike + products, Heart rate monitors, iPods and apps, nothing, etc.

What athletic activities do you do?

ie Basketball, running, biking, spin classes, cardio classes, etc.

If you could see results of your workouts what would you want to see?

What are your goals in working out?

Do you think tracking and knowing your heart rate during a workout is a good thing? YES or NO

Do you think tracking and knowing your calories burned during a workout is a good thing? YES or NO

Do you think having a place to see and store all your workout results easily is a good thing? YES or NO

Would you use a site that provides all the data of all your workout results easily? YES or NO

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## **POLAR PHONE SURVEY**

I contacted Polar Electro USA headquarters and conducted a phone interview to try and glean more insight into Polar's current marketing plan regarding heart rate monitors and with a plan to improve on it. As a private, international conglomerate there is not a lot of public available information about Polar Electro like it's 2011 heart rate monitor sales figures or any previous years. How much profit was earned? What is there marketing strategy for heart rate monitors, and how flexible is it? I interviewed Janelle Jackson, the VP of Marketing for Polar Electro USA, on Friday the 13th of July. Here is the question and answer session that lasted 30 minutes.

Do you have a detailed written marketing plan? Yes.

Can I have a copy of your marketing plan? No.

Ok, ma'am I already explained who I am and what I am doing is there a reason why we cannot share information? I am not able to provide you any information that is not already publicly known.

What are Polar Electro USA's strengths regarding heart rate monitors? Our customers are loyal. They will buy a Polar heart rate product and because it is high quality keep it forever. If and when our customers purchase other polar heart rate products, they pass on the old stuff to friends and family. Our heart rate products spread by word of mouth.

What are Polar Electro USA's weaknesses regarding heart rate monitors?  
There is not a lot of turnover in our heart rate products as mentioned above.

What is your current marketing mix for polar heart rate products? We use digital media and print advertising. We are very active with our social media i. e. facebook, and twitter, but we found that consumer forums and our forums at polarpersonaltrainer. com provide the most value.

How do you measure success or failure or what metrics are used for evaluation? Regarding facebook advertising the threshold for success is between 0. 2 and 0. 4. Using digital media provides instant feedback and analysis. It is harder to measure success or failure with print advertisements.

How is Polar Electro USA's businesses set up? We have these sections that we focus on: Consumer products, Education, Business to Business, Military, Human Resources, Team Sports, Health Clubs, Other Government, and Biathlons/Biathletes. Each has a specific marketing plan.

How do you tie the plans together to make a Polar Electro USA marketing plan?

What is your main marketing strategy?