

Family rivalry: adidas vs. puma critical thinking

[Business](#), [Company](#)



Puma and Adidas have been among the most renowned sports shoes manufacturers all over the world for more than half a century. These companies have supplied shoes to world-cup football teams, Olympic athletes, boxers, hip hop and rock stars to name but a few. However, these two companies might not have existed without the bitter sibling rivalry between two brothers; Adolf and Rudolf. This paper discusses the history of the two brothers and their company before splitting up, the characteristics of the two brothers and what resulted in the split up.

Adolf Dassler was a German soldier who took part in World War 1. After the war, Adolf went back to Herzogenaurach which was his hometown to become a cobbler. He started humble by using his parents laundry shed as his workshop. His first shoes were made from leather scraps that he salvaged from helmets and other army gear that were used during the war. He later developed interest in athletic footwear. His reputation in shoemaking spread beyond his hometown. To manage the expanded business he was joined by his older brother Rudolf. Rudolf handled sales as Adolf concentrated on making the shoes. In 1924 they founded Dassler Brother Shoe Company after opening a factory.

The two brothers, Adolf and Rudolf, had very little in common between them. Adolf was an introvert who had passion for making shoes. Adolf loved to sit on his workbench making shoes and working on new shoe designs all day. On the contrary, Rudolf was an extrovert who was loud-mouthed and short tempered. In the early years, their different characters complemented each other which proved good for business. The company became successful and even supplied shoes in both the 1928 and 1932 Olympics to Germany

athletes.

As the company become successful so did tension between the two brothers increase. Their relationship was further strained by the fact that their parents, wives and children lived together. They had several disagreements over the years. However, it was during World War II that the two brothers split up. In 1940, Adolf was called up by the military but successfully pleaded for an exemption after only 3 months probably with the help of Rudolf. In 1943, Rudolf was called for military service and could not get out. This made him bitter as he felt that Adolf and his wife secretly schemed to have him sent him to war so that in order to have the business by themselves. In retaliation, Rudolf unsuccessfully tried to have the factory shut down. Rudolf came back to his hometown in 1945 with the help of his friend, a doctor, who declared him unfit for serving in the military. In 1946, Adolf was to appear before a denazification committee. Rudolf testified against his brother hoping that he will assume control of the company if his brother was classified as a “ profiteer”. However, Adolf was cleared. By this time, the brothers could no longer work together and decided to split up.

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