Adidas vs. Nike: “Only the fast will survive”

Contributed by John Funnell
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Adidas AG on how to drive speed and innovation for retail success.

Herbert Hainer, CEO and Chairman of sporting goods giant Adidas, explains how he is driving the company towards that global no. 1 spot in an exclusive interview for MeetTheBoss.tv.

Since taking charge in 2001, Hainer has seen Adidasâ€™ net revenues grow to â‚¬10.5 billion in 2007 (within spitting distance of Nikeâ€™s â‚¬11.1 billion) and has critically positioned Adidas for 2010.

Like everyone, Adidas is feeling the economic pinch. 2009 results were down â€“ though better than expected â€“ and all eyes are on Hainer, the man who oversaw the sale of Salomon, to better focus on core competencies, and the reeling in of Reebok, for benefits of scale and a stronger footprint in that all important US market.

Can Hainer deliver the ultimate prize, and make Adidas world no. 1?

â€œWhen you are permanently running from one success to the next and from one successful or record year to the next, you are gaining fat. You are not as aggressive anymore,â€• says Hainer of his approach to the economic downturn. â€œWe took the opportunity to cut through, to change the way we do business to a certain extent, to define new processes, to get faster, to get leaner, and to get more efficient.â€•

Cut through he did, investing â‚¬100 million in restructuring and launching a flagship innovation program. Now, he says, the company is â€œmuch fasterâ€¦ we have made speedboats out of a big tanker.â€•

Hainer has been rewarded with category-leading new products. And in a FIFA World Cup year, he is confidently promising â€œa lot of new innovative productsâ€• for 2010.

Find out how he did it at MeetTheBoss.tv .

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