

PRSM 550

REI

EVERYBODY OUTSIDE

“Everybody Outside” builds on REI’s cherished #OptOutside ethos by breaking down barriers that keep underrepresented communities from enjoying outdoor recreation. Through community partnerships, free shuttle services to natural areas, and inclusive storytelling, the campaign seeks to make nature access equitable and empowering. REI is not simply inviting people into the outdoors, we’re meeting them where they are, equipping them for first-time adventures, and uplifting voices that have long been excluded.

JAY PARKS

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COMPANY OVERVIEW

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COMPANY BACKGROUND

Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI) is a specialty outdoor retailer founded in 1938 as a consumer cooperative. Headquartered in Kent, Washington, REI sells sporting goods, camping gear, travel equipment, and clothing through its retail stores and online platform. In addition to its commercial presence, REI has a long-standing reputation for social and environmental responsibility. It shares annual profits with its members, invests in local communities through grantmaking and partnerships, and has led national campaigns like #OptOutside, which encourages people to prioritize time in nature over consumerism. REI's commitment to sustainability and inclusion has made it a respected leader among purpose-driven brands.

MISSION STATEMENT

REI's mission is to "awaken a lifelong love of the outdoors, for all." As a consumer co-op, its business goal is not simply profit, but to empower more people to experience nature while protecting the planet. The company exists to promote outdoor exploration as a fundamental human right and to use business as a force for good through sustainability, community investment, and social equity initiatives.

BRAND POSITIONING

To outdoor enthusiasts and new adventurers seeking community, access, and impact, REI provides high-quality outdoor gear and inclusive outdoor experiences because it believes the outdoors should be open and welcoming to everyone, and it actively reinvests in people and the planet.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM OR OPPORTUNITY

Although REI has made strides in promoting access to the outdoors, participation gaps persist, especially among BIPOC communities, lower-income families, and individuals with disabilities. Existing campaigns like #OptOutside are admired but largely appeal to people already embedded in outdoor culture. The Everybody Outside campaign responds to a communication opportunity: to expand REI's brand purpose by actively including underrepresented voices and lowering systemic barriers to outdoor access. Doing so reinforces the brand's mission, enhances community trust, and opens new market potential while aligning with rising consumer expectations around social equity.



RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

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RESEARCH

Research Goals

To inform the Everybody Outside campaign, REI needs to gather insights into the cultural and systemic barriers that limit outdoor participation for underrepresented communities, including BIPOC, LGBTQ+, disabled, and low-income groups. Key research questions should explore perceptions of safety, affordability, representation, and relevance in outdoor culture. Additionally, REI should assess how the brand is currently perceived by these communities and how expectations around inclusion and equity are evolving.

Research Methodology

- Social listening to monitor discussions around outdoor equity, representation, and access
- Surveys to quantify attitudes, brand perceptions, and barriers to access
- Partnership engagement to source insights from local grassroots and advocacy organizations
- Competitive analysis to benchmark best practices and differentiate REI's positioning

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

- Strong purpose heritage through campaigns like #OptOutside and climate action
- Established relationships with environmental and equity-based nonprofits
- Highly engaged member base aligned with REI's mission-driven approach

Opportunities

- Expand brand relevance by building trust with emerging generations focused on equity
- Deepen partnerships with community-led organizations to co-create meaningful change
- Position REI as the industry leader in equitable outdoor access

Weaknesses

- Perception of exclusivity or elitism in outdoor gear pricing and culture
- Limited visible representation of marginalized groups in past campaigns
- Potential internal challenges in scaling workforce inclusion to match external messaging

Threats

- Risk of public skepticism if inclusion efforts appear performative or disconnected from action
- Broader polarization around DEI topics that could invite backlash
- Competitor brands activating similar purpose-driven messaging in the same space



INSIGHTS & COMMUNICATIONS

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STRATEGIC INSIGHTS

To ensure authenticity, REI must center impacted voices in both message creation and action. Representation in marketing is not enough, audiences expect to see real, measurable progress in improving access to nature. A successful strategy should connect storytelling with structural change, such as expanding grants, reducing cost barriers, and creating new pathways for community leadership in the outdoors. The Everybody Outside campaign should be built around collaboration, not just outreach. By designing content and experiences with communities rather than for them, REI can build long-term trust, reinforce brand purpose, and separate itself from competitors.

COMMUNICATION GOALS

1. Position REI as a national leader in advancing equitable outdoor access.
2. Deepen trust & engagement in underrepresented communities by addressing barriers to outdoor participation.
3. Strengthen alignment with REI's purpose by embedding equity & inclusion into brand storytelling & action.

COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

1. Achieve a **20% increase** in brand favorability among **BIPOC, LGBTQ+, disabled**, and **low-income** consumers within **12 months** of campaign launch (measured via sentiment tracking and surveys).
2. Generate at least **5 million impressions** from campaign content across PESO channels in the first **three months**.
3. Secure **10 new grassroots partnerships** with local organizations focused on outdoor access & equity within **1 year**.

TARGET AUDIENCES

Changemakers in Underrepresented Communities

Primarily BIPOC, LGBTQ+, disabled, and low-income individuals ages 18–40 who are interested in nature but face cultural, economic, or access-based barriers. Values include justice, authenticity, representation, and community empowerment. Urban-based, digitally active, and socially conscious.

Existing REI Members and Allies

Aged 30–55, mostly affluent and environmentally motivated, many of whom are already loyal to REI and interested in supporting equity-focused initiatives.

Grassroots and Advocacy Partners

Leaders and organizations working on environmental justice, inclusive outdoor education, and recreation equity. Important stakeholders for collaboration, credibility, and local reach.



BRAND PERCEPTION & MESSAGING

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CURRENT AUDIENCE BRAND PERCEPTION

Among loyal customers, REI is viewed as ethical, sustainable, and mission-driven. However, among many underrepresented groups, the brand is perceived as an aspirational but culturally distant organization, focused more on elite outdoor experiences than inclusive ones. Some may view REI as performative or disconnected from real, on-the-ground community needs, despite the progressive tone of its messaging.

DESIRED AUDIENCE BRAND PERCEPTION

REI aims to be seen as an outdoor brand that not only welcomes all people but actively removes barriers that prevent access. The goal is for marginalized communities to perceive REI as a partner in equity, an organization that shows up with humility, listens, invests locally, and amplifies underrepresented voices. While the campaign does not seek to change the brand for existing loyalists, it aims to expand perceptions to include a stronger sense of inclusion and social action.

KEY MESSAGE MAPPING

To underrepresented communities:

"The outdoors belongs to everyone. REI is investing in real ways to break down barriers & make nature accessible to all."

To existing REI members and allies:

"We're pushing our purpose beyond sustainability, to ensure equity, inclusion, and access are part of the outdoor future."

To grassroots partners and advocates:

"REI is listening, learning, and collaborating with those already doing work. Together, we'll make access more equitable."

CREATIVE PLATFORM

- 1. Audience Insight:** Many people from historically excluded groups want to spend time outdoors, but systemic, economic, and cultural barriers often make them feel unsafe or unwelcome.
- 2. Brand Truth:** REI has long been a purpose-led brand, but now must align its progressive ideals with real, equitable change in access and representation.
- 3. Cultural Relevance:** Outdoor equity is emerging as a central social issue intersecting with race, class, health, and environmental justice, especially in a post-pandemic, climate-impacted world.



STRATEGIES & TACTICS

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STRATEGIES

1. Elevate community-led narratives by spotlighting stories from individuals and groups who are breaking norms and expanding who gets to be seen in outdoor culture.
2. Activate internal culture by educating and empowering REI staff and co-op members to be brand ambassadors for equity in their stores and communities.
3. Create reciprocal partnerships with local, grassroots organizations to provide funding, gear, training, and visibility, aligning campaign execution with actual impact.

These strategies reflect REI's authentic brand values, but also push them to move beyond traditional environmentalism into intersectional, people-centered storytelling and action.

TACTICS

Paid

- Launch targeted digital video and social ad campaigns (YouTube, Meta, TikTok) highlighting community stories.
- Run bus stop, subway, and billboard placements in select urban neighborhoods (e.g., South Side Chicago, East Oakland, Atlanta).

Earned

- Pitch longform profiles to outlets like Outside, The Atlantic, and Fast Company showcasing campaign collaborators and equity impact.
- Arrange interviews with REI executives and grassroots partners on podcasts & local news.

Shared

- Collaborate with micro-influencers and community leaders to co-create content about their outdoor journeys.
- Launch an Instagram series featuring partner organizations and user-generated #EverybodyOutside stories.

Owned

- Build a dedicated REI.com microsite with campaign videos, resources, and maps of accessible outdoor spaces.
- Feature campaign messaging and partner content in newsletters, store signage, & app banners.

Integration across PESO ensures each tactic amplifies others, for example, paid social ads promote earned press stories, while influencer content is embedded in REI's owned digital channels.



TIMELINE & BUDGET

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TIMELINE

Activity	Start	End
Partner onboarding & creative development	July 2025	August 2025
Internal staff/ambassador activation	August 2025	Ongoing
Paid and shared media launch	September 2025	January 2026
Earned media outreach & editorial placement	September 2025	December 2025
Local events with partners	October 2025	February 2026
Campaign reporting & impact evaluation	March 2026	April 2026

BUDGET

Activity	Description	Cost
Content Production	Video shoots, photography, editing for campaign and microsite	\$150,000
Paid & Shared Media	YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, OOH transit & billboards	\$300,000
Grassroots Partner Support	Grants, gear, training for local orgs	\$100,000
Events & Community Programming	Local activations, staffing, permits, insurance	\$75,000
Influencer & Ambassador Stipends	Micro-influencer partnerships, content co-creation	\$50,000
Platform Development	Campaign microsite, hosting, newsletter integration	\$25,000

TOTAL ESTIMATED BUDGET: \$700,000



MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION

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KPIS

To evaluate the campaign's success and ensure alignment with both brand and societal goals, KPIs will be tied directly to communication objectives. Measurement categories include reach, engagement, conversion, and impact.

Awareness and Reach

- Impressions from paid social and digital ads (target: 10M+ over campaign duration).
- Website traffic to the Everybody Outside microsite (baseline + monthly growth).

Engagement

- Social media shares, likes, and #EverybodyOutside campaign uses (goal: 100K+ UGC posts in first 6 months).
- Dwell time and interaction rates on campaign content (goal: avg. video watch time >75%)

Conversions

- Number of new co-op members who cite campaign exposure.
- Increase in event signups or gear rentals in targeted neighborhoods.

Impact

- Partner-reported metrics (e.g., attendance at outdoor events, distribution of gear, program participation).
- Quarterly equity audits on REI's partner investment and representation metrics.

Evaluation will be presented both numerically and via qualitative testimonials from community partners and audience participants.

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THANK YOU

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