

## **Company background**

SKIMS is one of the biggest brands in the lingerie and loungewear industry. Kim Kardashian founded and launched the company in 2018 under the name “Kimono” but was criticized for “appropriating Japanese culture” by selling underwear that had nothing to do with traditional Japanese clothing (DeStefano & Takanashi, 2023). Kardashian announced less than a week later that she changed the name to “SKIMS,” promising to focus on diversity, thoughtfulness and inclusivity in sizes, skin tones and body shapes (Rambharose, 2024).

SKIMS' first collection included bodysuits, bras, underwear and other shapewear from sizes XXS to 5X and various colors. Categories are divided as seamless sculpt, core control, sheer sculpt, contour bonded, fits everybody and mesh intimates (DeStefano & Takanashi, 2023). The models on the packages and the website range in body types, sizes, skin tones and age. Nordstrom partnered with SKIMS in 2020 as their first online and in-store retail partner, which has been extremely profitable for both companies (DeStefano & Takanashi, 2023). In 2021 SKIMS opened pop-up experiences in Paris and Los Angeles and released a collection with Fendi. The collection sold out in one minute and generated \$1 million in sales (DeStefano & Takanashi, 2023). The swimwear line was released in 2022 to “take away the anxiety of wearing and buying swimwear,” a traditionally uncomfortable experience that is not inclusive (DeStefano & Takanashi, 2023). Shortly following the launch of activewear in 2023, SKIMS announced its \$4 billion value and released their first men’s line which includes “underwear, T-shirts, tank tops, leggings and socks” in “cotton, stretch and sport” (DeStefano & Takanashi, 2023). SKIMS then became “the official underwear of the NBA, WNBA and USA Basketball” in a three-year partnership with various on-court signage, national broadcasts and event activations (DeStefano & Takanashi, 2023).

SKIMS is sold exclusively on their website, SKIMS locations, Nordstrom and various department stores in the U.S. as well as the SKIMS app where customers can join a rewards program and have exclusive early access to shop the Bi-Annual sale, get shopping benefits and free returns (SKIMS Stockists, 2024). Returnable orders can be made internationally with various shipping fees (SKIMS Stockists, 2024). The main competitors of SKIMS include Rihanna’s Savage x Fenty lingerie line, SPANX and innerwear women’s line ThirdLove (Tracxn, 2024).

## **Mission statement**

- Mission: to set new standards by providing solutions for every body with shapewear, loungewear and underwear that enhances curves and stretches to any size (About SKIMS, 2024).
- Goal: to “consistently innovate on the past and advance our industry for the future” (About SKIMS, 2024).

## **Brand positioning**

To: Women and men of all body types, skin tones and sizes

Brand is: Clothing with various fabric materials, styles and colors including shapewear, underwear, loungewear, swimwear and activewear (About SKIMS, 2024)

That: Provides stylish comfortability and practicality designed to enhance confidence through diversity and inclusion (About SKIMS, 2024)

Because: SKIMS is available internationally, includes a range of prices around \$30-\$200 and is constantly adapting to the latest fashion trends. Consumers can find a wide variety of clothing that caters to their specific body type and skin tone.

## **Statement of Opportunity**

SKIMS partnered with Team USA’s women’s teams during the 2021 Tokyo Summer Olympics and again for the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, making SKIMS the “official underwear of Team USA at the Summer Olympics” (DeStefano & Takanashi, 2023). Team USA reunited with SKIMS for the 2024 Paris Summer Olympics and Paralympics, launching a campaign that included men’s, swim and adaptive styles for the first time (Kelly & Saunders, 2024). Since 2008, Ralph Lauren has designed the opening and closing ceremony looks for Team USA and Nike has provided the garments, such as sports bras and spandex shorts, that U.S. Olympians wear to compete (Forbes, 2024). SKIMS filled the missing gap, underwear, in their largest and most inclusive 2024 partnership.

The collection, designed for athletes and fans, featured the brand’s signature fabrics with underwear, sleepwear, swimwear and loungewear. Each piece incorporated Team USA branding along with Olympic Rings and Paralympic Agitos (MADE Trends, 2024). SKIMS’ partnerships with Olympians and Paralympians such as Sunisa Lee, Jessica Long, Fred Kerley, Nick Mayhugh and more who modeled for and gave statements on the line dominated the media (Directo-Meston & Lassner, 2024).

Following SKIMS' 2021 and 2022 Olympic partnerships, the 2024 campaign was needed to reinforce the concept that SKIMS is the official Olympic underwear brand. The company now has "SKIMS for Team USA capsules" with a unique collection of clothing that represents each year's partnership (Directo-Meston & Lassner, 2024). The campaign also included custom fixtures, gifts to the Olympians, an athletes-only pop-up in Paris and a "retro" campaign photoshoot with popular Olympians as the stars (Directo-Meston & Lassner, 2024). This campaign was an opportunity to strengthen the brand's relationship with its other partners in the sports industry as well as celebrities and influencers. This could also bring in new partnerships because of the campaign's success in advertising for SKIMS, Team USA, and the Olympic brand.

### **Research**

SKIMS' founder, Kim Kardashian, is one of the most influential media personalities and reality TV stars (DeStefano & Takanashi, 2023). While the Kardashian/Jenner brand gives companies associated with them a competitive advantage because of their large fan base, it may also pose challenges as many people perceive them negatively. Even though they are constantly criticized for lacking talent and producing various brands to make more money, SKIMS has differentiated itself from this critique because consumers genuinely enjoy the product and its inclusive mission (DeStefano & Takanashi, 2023). With Kim Kardashian's plethora of connections and relationships with brands and celebrities, SKIMS has an opportunity to create meaningful campaigns to drive business and communication objectives.

### **Research goals**

Which Olympic athletes align the most with SKIMS' values and how are they perceived in the media? What do the primary audiences for SKIMS and the Olympics have in common? Which products should SKIMS prioritize and how can they follow the current fashion trends? Which social and digital media strategies should SKIMS use to garner the most visibility and interaction? How will SKIMS evaluate the financial impact and strengthen its relationship with key stakeholders?

### **Research methodology: Primary**

#### **Quantitative research:**

Statistical measures to answer these questions can be collected through online and social media surveys. A feedback survey with a mix of multiple choice and written responses would

help understand the attitudes and beliefs about SKIMS from fans, athletes and current and potential consumers. Questions can be asked about their current opinion of SKIMS, their perception of the campaign including its impact on their social media pages and if they are more likely to purchase SKIMS products now. The survey should be accessible on the SKIMS website and app as a pop-up, in email newsletters for all registered SKIMS accounts and on the SKIMS Instagram and TikTok accounts via story posts and links in the bio. They can also use incentives such as promotional codes or giveaways as a thank you for completing the survey.

### **Qualitative research:**

Research can also be collected through focus groups divided by SKIMS' partners, Olympics and SKIMS consumers and the athletes used or not used in the campaign. The focus group with SKIMS' partners could include representatives from the NBA, WNBA, Olympics, Fendi, Nordstrom and more. This would gauge how the SKIMS campaign impacts these other brands and if they are satisfied by a mutually beneficial partnership financially and socially. A focus group with Gen-Z and Millennial consumers of SKIMS and the Olympics, who may have positive or negative views, would garner valuable insight into the social media consumption of the campaign and if it is an advantage or disadvantage to both brand's popularity and relevance. Discussions with the athletes would ensure that SKIMS continues to understand their values, opinions and experiences and find ways to help each side market themselves to the consumer.

### **Research methodology: Secondary**

SKIMS must research its competition to further differentiate itself in the lingerie and clothing industry. This can be done by collecting media coverage, company annual reports and Google analytics about their competitors. One of their top competitors, Savage x Fenty, is a lingerie and loungewear brand founded by Rihanna. SKIMS can gather data about Savage x Fenty from online articles, interviews, social media and campaigns they have done. This would help understand how they are perceived in the media and the feedback they receive from consumers, which can be found in comment sections and various rankings. Analyzing Savage x Fenty's company annual reports would be a tactic for comparing financial earnings, which could give ideas for budgeting and product pricing. Google analytics could include the comparison of website clicks and Google searches for both brands, which may impact SKIMS' use of search engine optimization.

### **Situation analysis**

**Internal: Strengths**

- Established brand and awareness: SKIMS has become one of the most high-valued Kardashian brands worth \$4 billion in 2024. The company is well-known in the lingerie and loungewear industry for its quality and fashionability (Osum, 2024).
- Diversity and inclusion: SKIMS offers a wide range of sizes and colors, catering to all body types and skin tones (Osum, 2024). The shapewear is specifically adaptable for body contouring under various outfit types.
- Product portfolio: SKIMS has expanded into swimwear, athleisure, pajamas and everyday clothing for men and women. This wide range of product offerings drives sales and expands SKIMS' market presence (PYMNTS, 2023).

**Internal: Weaknesses**

- Kardashian image: While Kim Kardashian has a large fan base, she also has a lot of haters who are not shy to express their opinions online (Osum, 2024). This may perpetuate consumers who want to boycott any Kardashian-related products and encourage others to do the same.
- Limited distribution channels: As SKIMS functions mainly online on its website, this limits accessibility to consumers who prefer to or can only shop in person (Osum, 2024). SKIMS' section in Nordstrom is only applicable to those who have access to a Nordstrom department store.
- Expensive: SKIMS products are priced in line with other premium and high-end lingerie lines and have limited sale offerings (HelloAdvisr, 2021).

**External: Opportunities**

- Rise in influencer marketing: Social media offers various opportunities for paid and unpaid influencer partnerships. SKIMS can use this for specific campaigns, paid advertising or organic reviews in exchange for free products.
- International expansion: With over 20% of its online shop's consumer base being overseas, SKIMS can expand and open stores globally (PYMNTS, 2023).
- Widespread brand collaborations: Based on the success of SKIMS' past and current partnerships with celebrities and other brands, this encourages other

groups to work with them (Osum, 2024). Investors and campaign collaborations for SKIMS would increase visibility in the fashion industry and the media.

#### **External: Threats**

- **Competitors:** SKIMS has competitors who are well-established in the lingerie space, including some with lower pricing, such as Spanx, Savage x Fenty, Honeylove and Yummie (HelloAdvisor, 2021).
- **Knock-offs:** Many companies have been found to copy SKIMS' designs and concepts for various clothing types (HelloAdvisor, 2021). It is also widely popular to find SKIMS "dupes", or alternatives, now that consumers can find similar products at a much lower price on Amazon.
- **Evolving consumer trends:** The fashion industry rapidly evolves as consumer preferences and trends change (Osum, 2024). SKIMS must constantly stay up to date with the market and adapt itself to the behaviors of its target audiences.

#### **Strategic insights**

- **Expansion of products:** SKIMS needs to constantly adapt to the current season's fashion trends involving styles, patterns and types of wear. Financially, SKIMS has the resources to release new collections and limited editions (PYMNTS, 2023). To combat the knock-offs in the market, they can create unique designs with quality fabrics that would be hard if not impossible to duplicate. If SKIMS focuses on consumer feedback and preferences, they can cater to all demographics including age, gender and socioeconomic status. This outweighs their competitors in the lingerie and clothing industry who may only focus on a certain target audience or do not have the resources to expand product offerings.
- **Social media and influencers:** SKIMS should maximize the opportunities with influencer marketing and social media to expand its brand collaborations and campaign strategy. Product reviews from micro-influencers would help reach narrow audiences and provide a sense of authenticity and genuine interaction with fans. Partnerships with major influencers and celebrities, something SKIMS is already advanced at, help create impactful campaigns that are relevant and exciting. SKIMS' partners and investors in various industries can bandwagon on this so that each party is following current events and media frenzies.

- **In-person events:** Because SKIMS is available mostly online and has opportunities to expand internationally, the company should host promotions, discounts, pop-up stores and events. Pop-ups, small or large temporary shopping spaces, are a great way for SKIMS to offer in-person shopping around the world without having to commit to a permanent location. SKIMS-oriented events that involve the Kardashians and other influencers would generate media coverage, cater to Gen-Z and millennials and offer discounts, promotions and giveaways in fun and unique ways.

### **Communication goals**

- **Expand partnership with Team USA and the Olympics:** SKIMS wanted to continue its Team USA partnership in the 2024 Paris Olympics and Paralympics with a new limited-edition collection (MADE Trends, 2024). This line, building on SKIMS' past capsule collections for the Olympics, included men's styles, adaptable wear and swim for the first time using signature quality and comfortable fabrics (MADE Trends, 2024).
- **Empower all athletes and fans:** Kim Kardashian expressed her "honor to support Team USA", inspire all athletes and empower everybody by "reinventing [SKIMS'] adaptive intimates" (MADE Trends, 2024). With each piece incorporating Team USA branding, Olympic Rings and Paralympic Agitos, the collection was designed for athletes to relax during the games and for fans to show their support (MADE Trends, 2024). SKIMS' use of both Olympians and Paralympians in the campaign further strengthened their mission of diversity and inclusion while also inspiring people who look up to these athletes and value their attitudes and beliefs.

### **Communications objectives**

- **Gain media coverage in 20 fashion, sports or popular culture publications:** Positive campaign analysis and coverage in various online articles or blogs benefits SKIMS' partnerships, rankings and credibility in the industry. With this written collection of its strategies and impact, particularly in collaboration with Team USA and the Olympics, SKIMS can generate legacy and awareness. This can also be enhanced by their inclusion of people with disabilities.
- **Increase social media engagement with Gen-Z and millennials by 50% by September 2024:** SKIMS needs to engage with Gen-Z, millennials and influencers on social media so that they increase the likeability of Kardashian-related brands. Heavy use

of the SKIMS Instagram and TikTok during the campaign should help generate awareness of the new collection, its collaboration with influential athletes and excitement from consumers of both SKIMS and the Olympics.

- **Garner 40% sales increase of the Olympic collection pieces by September 2024:**

Because certain pieces of this campaign's collection were limited-edition, SKIMS needed to focus on driving sales by the end of the Summer Olympic and Paralympic period to meet financial goals that they could include in the annual report. The campaign could achieve this by increasing clicks to their website. People purchasing from the Olympic collection likely created a SKIMS account, which may make them buy other products and become returning customers.

### **Target audiences**

- **Gen-Z and Millennials:** SKIMS' primary consumer audience is women ages 18-34, with the male audience now growing from the recent launch of the men's line. These groups likely live in households with an annual income of less than \$50,000 and have a wide range of nationalities and religions (CivicScience, 2023). This demographic values following fashion trends and interacts the most with Instagram and TikTok campaigns. Especially since the Covid-19 pandemic, comfortability and loungewear are largely popular for Gen-Z and millennials when studying, going to work or class, working out and other daily activities.
- **Investors and partners:** As a private company, SKIMS depends largely on its investors such as D1 Capital Partners hedge fund and Wellington Management asset manager as well as its partnerships including the NBA, WNBA and the Olympics (PitchBook, 2024). With the help of its 10 investors, SKIMS has raised \$729 million in funding (PitchBook, 2024). NBA and WNBA fans rank as top in favorability towards SKIMS compared to other major league sports, with soccer fans following behind (CivicScience, 2023). SKIMS' sports partnerships are bringing in a major demographic, athletes and sports fans of various backgrounds, as consumers of SKIMS products. The revenue that SKIMS generates from its buyers and brand partnerships makes the brand very favorable to investors and acquisition partners (PitchBook, 2024). Having completed the third successful campaign with the Olympics, a key audience for SKIMS is also Team USA and the Olympic brand as a whole.



- **Influencers and celebrities:** SKIMS has completed campaigns with celebrities during the most relevant points in their career, such as Nicola Coughlan from the new Bridgerton season, Lana Del Ray during her album release, Patrick Mahomes during NFL season and more. SKIMS also collaborates on social media with both Gen-Z and millennial macro and micro-influencers who have various incomes, genders, sexualities, cultures and nationalities. As a consumer of social media myself, I have noticed that each partnership SKIMS completes is very relevant to the current conversation about popular culture influentials and celebrities. These collaborations are integral in how SKIMS presents itself in the media and the interactions it generates about products in general and during campaigns.

### **Current audience brand perception**

SKIMS is a trendy and slightly expensive clothing brand that does campaigns with popular celebrities and influencers (hypothesis).

### **Desired audience brand perception**

SKIMS is an inclusive and body-positive brand that celebrates all shapes, sizes and skin tones. We provide high-quality and innovative shapewear, loungewear and intimates that encourage confidence for everyone (About SKIMS, 2024).

### **Key message mapping**

- **Single-minded message:** "Our shared mission of empowering everybody really shines through in the collaboration this year with the addition of our men's styles to reinventing our adaptive intimates. The athletes in our campaign look incredible in the collection, and I can't wait to cheer them on this summer in SKIMS!," said Kim Kardashian (Santino, 2024).
  - Rather than just focusing on selling the collection, Kardashian and her team consistently emphasized their support for the athletes and made it about their shared experience with the fans.
- **Gen-Z and Millennials:** At SKIMS, we always want to amplify diversity and inclusion by creating pieces that work for everyone. This year's collaboration with the Olympics includes a fun new collection that we are excited for you to be a part of (hypothesis).
  - The social media aspect of the campaign caters to Gen-Z and millennials' affinity for connecting with their favorite Olympians, hearing from influencers and

interacting with others online. Their experience with the campaign helps SKIMS understand how to use social media effectively.

- **Investors and partners:** “SKIMS was the third highest EMV earner, only exceeded by fashion giants Dior and Ralph Lauren, even outperforming Louis Vuitton in online visibility” (Lefty, 2024).
  - “SKIMS’ alignment with Sports and the Olympics dates back several months, as the brand started teasing key partnerships with the U.S. Women’s Basketball team back in May 2024. The official campaign for its 2024 Olympics collection was previewed in June, further building hype ahead of the games” (Lefty, 2024).
- **Influencers and celebrities:** “SKIMS’ success could also be attributed to a strong TikTok marketing strategy, which varied from informal TikToks of athletes going about their day wearing SKIMS, to stylized shoots that still felt personal” (Lefty, 2024).
  - By featuring the beliefs and values of influencers and celebrity athletes, the campaign kept storytelling and audience connection at its core.

## Strategies

- Promote diversity and inclusion by showcasing various body types and abilities
  - SKIMS’ first collaboration with the Paralympics and men’s line for their third Olympic campaign was used to strengthen SKIMS’ consistent messaging about inclusivity. After this campaign, SKIMS may not only be known for its diverse size and color range but also for how it can style men and people with visible disabilities (Kelly & Saunders, 2024).
- Utilize partnerships with brands, influencers and Olympians
  - SKIMS was able to capitalize on the global publicity of the 2024 Olympics and increase visibility for itself and its partners through influencer marketing and earned media value (EMV) (Lefty, 2024).
- Leverage social media and press to create a personal brand experience
  - The virality aspect of social media helped amplify SKIMS’ campaign materials and outreach. Press coverage from various channels and media outlets helped target audiences who may not use social media while also establishing SKIMS’ credibility (Lefty, 2024).
- Maintain relevancy by generating multi-channel real-time content

- For the entirety of the campaign, content was produced from both SKIMS' social media pages as well as from the Olympians and influencers themselves. Interviews, quotes and fan interactions were collected and advertised while also highlighting the collection in new ways for SKIMS (Directo-Meston & Lassner, 2024).

## **Tactics**

### **Social media**

Owned media: SKIMS hired Greg Swales, a renowned photographer, to shoot a retro-inspired photoshoot of the showcased Olympians for the campaign. The produced videos and photographs are of the Team USA athletes wearing the SKIMS collection against a regal red backdrop with the American flag (Marca, 2024). The athletes star Sunisa Lee, Jessica Long, Caeleb Dressel and more. This was shared on the Instagram pages of SKIMS, Kim Kardashian and pinned on the athlete's accounts.

Shared media: The photoshoot garnered thousands of likes, comments and shares from consumers across Instagram and TikTok (Marca, 2024). The SKIMS comment section was filled with positive interaction from people calling the campaign "phenomenal" and asking about shipping times (SKIMS Instagram).

Earned media: Olympians who are also influencers made their own content with the merchandise they received from SKIMS. Rugby bronze medalist Ilona Maher, who is now on Dancing with the Stars, generated \$8.74 million EMV with three posts on her Instagram (Lefty, 2024). Maher and others also posted lighthearted TikToks wearing pieces from the collection and interacting with people in the comments.

### **Ads**

Paid media: SKIMS used sponsored posts with the Olympians on Instagram and TikTok as part of their content output (Lefty, 2024). Consumers scrolling on social media saw pop-up advertisements between posts on their feed and when looking through stories. Images from the photoshoot had clickable links directly on the post that would take the user to the items modeled in the image on the SKIMS website.

### **Press**

Earned media: Media coverage on various pop-culture publications includes key quotes from interviews with the Olympians, Kim Kardashian and SKIMS partners. People magazine

published an article in which gymnast Sunisa Lee said she is a “long-time SKIMS fan”, the partnership was a “dream come true” and she “loves that SKIMS delivers on comfort, flexibility and style that makes her look and feel great” (Marca, 2024). Paralympic swimmer Jessica Long said she was “so excited to be part of the SKIMS and Team USA campaign as a huge fan of the brand and their purpose of providing solutions for everybody”, which is a sentiment she also shared on her Instagram (Marca, 2024).

Peter Zeytoonjian, senior vice president of U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Properties, shared in an interview with People that “the first collection with SKIMS was a huge hit” for both fans and athletes and that they were “thrilled to bring another collection to life” (Santino, 2024).

### **Website**

Owned media: During the campaign, the SKIMS Instagram would announce each drop of limited-time pieces available on the website. Some pieces in signature USA colors are still available on the “SKIMS for Team USA” page (SKIMS, 2024). Each section is captioned with loungewear described as “winning game day lounge”, intimates as “first-place first layers” and sleep as “gold-medal-worthy pajamas that celebrate Team USA” (SKIMS, 2024). The models include men and women of different racial backgrounds and body types as well as models with prosthetic legs in wheelchairs.

### **Events**

Owned media: SKIMS hosted its first welcome experience for Team USA in Paris on July 29, 2024 (Directo-Meston & Lassner, 2024). The pop-up included an exclusive gifting suite with merchandise, swag and access to the full collection for the Olympians. The suite was creatively designed with three large gold, bronze and silver Olympic medals hanging from the ceiling with the classic SKIMS logo written across them and the walls. Mannequins were dressed in men’s and women’s SKIMS clothing and swimwear, and duffel bags with the Olympic, Paralympic and Team USA logos were hanging across the room (Directo-Meston & Lassner, 2024).

### **KPIs**

- Analytics
  - SKIMS’ website ranking by traffic increased in June and July 2024, which were the peak times of the campaign. The U.S. was the top country at 71%. During this time the top audience was in the 25-34 age group and gender distribution was

75% female and 25% male. Target audiences were dominated by those interested in fashion and apparel, news and media publishers and beauty (Similarweb, 2024).

- Marketing channel distribution outlined 60% direct traffic to the website, 15% organic search and 7% referral. Keyword searches involving “SKIMS” was 51% organic and 48% paid (Similarweb, 2024).
- Social media impressions and traffic to the SKIMS website were driven by Instagram, TikTok, Facebook and Youtube (Similarweb, 2024).
- Media coverage
  - SKIMS was “attributed to a strong TikTok and Instagram marketing strategy” throughout the 2024 Olympics (Lefty, 2024). With both formal and informal content produced by the athletes, the campaign was interpreted as meaningful and favorable to Olympic and SKIMS fans.
  - Sharing the voices of “local heroes like Sunisa Lee” who spoke about how SKIMS aligns with their values extended mention of the campaign across various platforms on social media and in publications such as Forbes (Lefty, 2024). This was important for increasing the likeability and purchasing of SKIMS products even though it is associated with the Kardashian image, which can sometimes be negative.
  - Kim Kardashian helped amplify the heart of content and storytelling with quotes in magazines such as The Hollywood Reporter and consistently sharing content on social media for her 360 million followers (Directo-Meston & Lassner, 2024).

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