

# Nike

"Corporate strategy inside the world's top sports brand"

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| <b>FOUNDED</b><br><b>1964, Portland OR (as Blue Ribbon Sports)</b>     | <b>REVENUE</b><br><b>\$46.3B (FY2025, ended May 2025)</b>                     | <b>KNOWN FOR</b><br><b>Brand power, DTC shift, athlete partnerships</b>         | <b>STRATEGY FOCUS</b><br><b>DTC transformation, digital, supply chain</b>        |
| <b>FORMAT</b><br><b>Screen → functional rounds → senior leadership</b> | <b>CASE STYLE</b><br><b>Consumer strategy, DTC/wholesale, brand economics</b> | <b>BEHAVIORAL</b><br><b>Sport/brand passion, cross-functional collaboration</b> | <b>CONSUMER KNOWLEDGE</b><br><b>Athletic footwear/apparel landscape expected</b> |

## WHO THEY ARE

Nike was founded in 1964 as Blue Ribbon Sports, rebranded in 1971, and is now the world's largest athletic footwear and apparel company with \$50B+ annual revenue. The Swoosh is recognized globally and the brand commands premium pricing while driving consumer loyalty across decades. Nike operates simultaneously as a brand company, product company, supply chain operator, retailer, and DTC digital platform. The strategic shift toward DTC—investing heavily in Nike.com and the Nike app while pulling back from wholesale partners like Foot Locker—is one of the most significant consumer goods transformations in a decade. This transition creates complex organizational and strategic questions being actively debated at senior levels.

## WHY PEOPLE WANT TO WORK HERE

Nike attracts candidates who want to apply rigorous strategy to consumer psychology, athlete partnerships, and cultural moments rather than just platform economics. The DTC transformation is creating high-stakes strategy work: decisions about direct consumer relationships versus wholesale involve real trade-offs in revenue, margin, and brand positioning that shape the company's future. Unlike most \$50B companies, Nike retains challenger brand energy and culture: the Portland headquarters, athlete connections, and mission-driven identity create motivation for candidates who care about the brand itself. Strategy roles sit at the center of cross-functional complexity, requiring you to work closely with brand, product, finance, and operations teams on problems that matter to how consumers experience sport.

## INTERVIEW PROCESS

Nike's corporate strategy interview includes a recruiter screen, multiple functional rounds with strategy team members and cross-functional partners, and a final senior leadership round. The process is less standardized than tech companies and varies by team: expect less structural consistency than Google or Amazon. Case or analytical exercises are typical, grounded in Nike's actual strategic context like DTC versus wholesale trade-offs or category growth strategy. You need to understand consumer goods, retail, brand economics, and the athletic footwear competitive landscape, not just apply generic frameworks. Behavioral interviews emphasize cultural alignment: passion for sport and brand, cross-functional collaboration skills, and ability to operate in a complex matrix organization.

## WHAT THEY'RE REALLY EVALUATING

Nike evaluates strategic thinking quality, consumer and brand orientation, and cultural fit. The analytical bar is high: the strategy team hires rigorous thinkers who can bring structured reasoning to brand and consumer problems, not pure intuition. Consumer orientation is equally important: candidates who analyze Nike's challenges only through financial lenses without understanding how brand, behavior, and culture interact will miss what makes Nike's strategy distinct. Cultural fit carries real weight at Nike in ways it doesn't at tech companies. The brand's connection to sport, competition, and athlete culture runs deep throughout the organization. Candidates who genuinely follow sport, understand athlete and consumer desires, and find Nike's cultural positioning compelling will resonate with interviewers in unmistakable ways.

## STANDOUT QUESTIONS

1. How would you evaluate Nike's decision to pull back from wholesale partners like Foot Locker and invest in DTC? What are the strategic trade-offs?
2. Nike is losing market share to On Running and Hoka in the performance running category. How do you diagnose and respond?
3. How would you think about Nike's strategy for growing in a major emerging market (e.g., India or Southeast Asia) where the brand is strong but penetration is low?
4. Tell me about a time you developed a strategy that required you to balance short-term financial performance against longer-term brand positioning.
5. What do you think is the most important strategic challenge facing Nike in the next five years, and what would you prioritize?
6. Describe a situation where you had to work across multiple functions (marketing, finance, operations) to drive a strategic outcome. What was your approach?

## INSIDER TIPS

- Know Nike's DTC strategy in depth: it's the defining strategic question of the company right now. Understand the financial trade-offs (DTC has higher margins but requires more investment; wholesale provides volume but commoditizes the brand), the digital platform investments, and how Nike is managing the transition. This is the context for almost every strategy conversation at Nike.
- Consumer and brand knowledge matters as much as analytical rigor. Nike is a brand company at its core. Interviewers want to see that you understand consumer behavior, brand equity, and how cultural moments drive business outcomes, not just financial modeling. Read Nike's earnings calls, follow the athletic footwear competitive landscape, and have a view on where the industry is going.
- Sport and brand passion is not just nice-to-have. Nike's culture is deeply connected to sport. Candidates who are authentic fans of sport, who understand what athletes and consumers actually care about, and who find the brand mission compelling will fit in ways that are hard for purely financially-motivated candidates to replicate.
- Cross-functional collaboration stories are important. Nike is a complex matrix organization. Strategy professionals work closely with brand, product, digital, and supply chain. Prepare examples of driving outcomes across functions with competing priorities: this is the core competency of strategy in a company like Nike.