Twitter Thread by Joe Pompliano

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One NBA player has sold more than 200 million pairs of shoes, but you won't find them at Nike, Adidas, or Under Armour.

Time for a thread ■■■

1) First, some history...

From Clyde Frazier & Puma to LeBron James & Nike, signature shoes have been a staple in the NBA since the early 1970s.

Simply put, every player wants one.

Including 20-year-old Shaquille O'Neal, who met with Nike & Reebok before the 1982 NBA Draft.



2) When @SHAQ met with Nike before the 1982 NBA draft, he made his desire clear:

"I wanted my own shoe."

The result?

Nike declined, as they had just signed Alonzo Mourning.

"That pissed me off...They didn't escort me out, but the meeting was short."

Next up, Reebok.

3) After Nike declined to offer him a signature shoe, Shaq received a $15M offer from Reebok — which included a signature shoe & apparel line.

Even better?

Shaq demanded complete creative control.

"I wanted to create all of my own commercials."

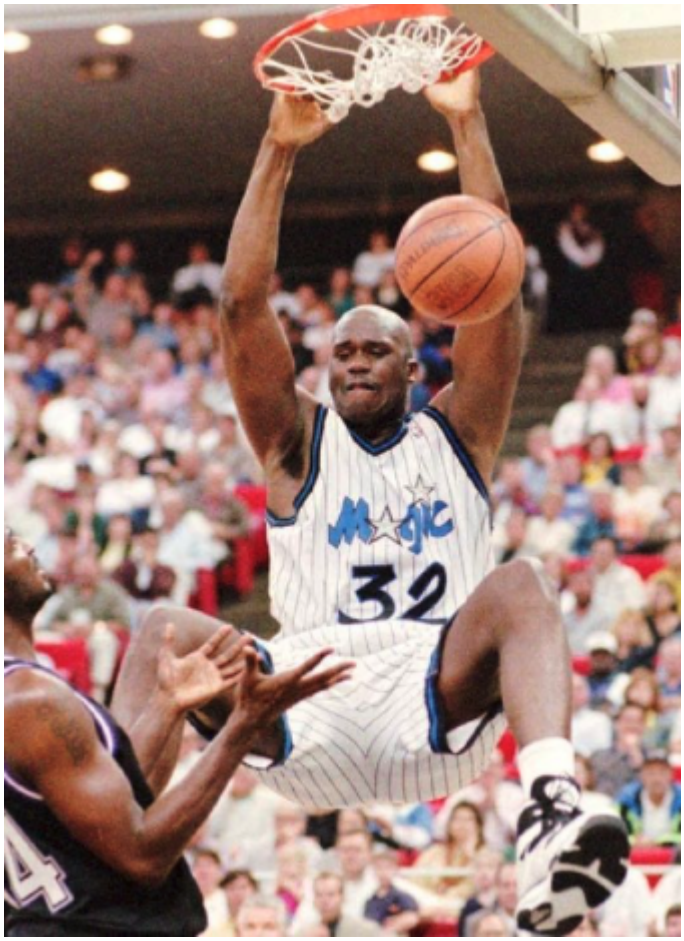
They obliged, and he accepted.



4) From 1992 to 1998, the relationship between Reebok and @SHAQ flourished.

Not only did they make 6 signature shoes together, but Shaq turned into a perennial All-Star — benefitting Reebok with millions in sales.

Everything was great until one interaction changed everything...



5) Leaving the Orlando arena in 1998, Shaq was confronted & cursed out by a mother.

Why?

She asked, "Why doesn't anyone make affordable shoes?"

Shaq offered her $2,000, but she smacked it out of his hand.

Knowing she was right, he immediately set up a meeting with Reebok.

6) After realizing the gap between the cost of basketball shoes and what a typical family could pay, Shaq decided to leave Reebok.

He started his own line in 1998, but where would he sell them?

"I asked myself, who is the largest retailer in the world?"

The answer?

Walmart.

7) For the last two decades, @SHAQ has been selling his shoes through Walmart — with most retailing for $15-$30, compared to $200+ at Nike.

The best part?

While others have laughed, Shaq has been selling.

In total, he's sold more than 200 million pairs.



8) When it comes to shoes, there's a reason Shaq was comfortable leaving some money on the table.

Along with an early investment in Google, Shaq owns:

— 150 car washes
— 17 Auntie Anne's
— 40 24-hr fitness gyms

At one point, Shaq owned 155 Five Guys — or 10% of all locations.

9) Despite commonly being referred to as one of the NBA's funniest players, @SHAQ is also an incredible entrepreneur and investor.

Simply put, he gets it.

10) Shaq is a great example of what happens when you serve the needs of the customer.

Blaze your own trail, stay true to your roots, and do things your way.

In the end, it usually pays off.



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