

## COCA-COLA'S "SHARE A COKE" CAMPAIGN – A REVIEW

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### **ABSTRACT:**

Coca-Cola's "Share a Coke" campaign was first launched in Australia in 2011 and later expanded to India in 2013. The campaign involved printing individual names on Coca-Cola bottles and cans, encouraging customers to share a Coke with someone whose name was on the bottle.

Key Words: Amazon, The Great Indian Festival, Marketing Campaign, Case Study

### **INTRODUCTION**

Coca-Cola is one of the most well-known and valuable brands in the world. Since its founding in 1886, the company has become synonymous with fizzy, refreshing beverages and has captured the hearts and minds of consumers across the globe. However, even iconic brands like Coca-Cola can experience challenges in today's ever-changing marketing landscape.

In 2011, Coca-Cola faced declining sales in Australia, and the company was looking for a way to revive its brand image and create a more emotional connection with consumers. The solution came in the form of an innovative marketing campaign: "Share a Coke." The campaign involved printing individual names on Coca-Cola bottles and cans, encouraging customers to share a Coke with someone whose name was on the bottle.

### **Background of the company:**

Coca-Cola is a multinational beverage corporation headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia. It was founded in 1886 and has since become one of the most well-known and valuable brands in the world. Coca-Cola is known for its flagship product, Coca-Cola Classic, as well as a wide range of other beverages, including Sprite, Fanta, and Diet Coke.

Before the "Share a Coke" campaign, Coca-Cola was facing declining sales in some markets, including Australia and India. The company was also struggling with a negative brand image, particularly in India, where it was facing criticism over the high sugar content of its products and concerns about environmental impact.

Coca-Cola has been a dominant player in the soft drink industry for over a century. However, in recent years, the company has faced declining sales and increasing competition from healthier alternatives like water and juices. In response, Coca-Cola's marketing team decided to come up with a campaign that would help the company connect with its customers and increase brand loyalty. The team's goal was to create a campaign that would be unique and engaging, while also promoting Coca-Cola's brand image and values.

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### **Problem**

Coca-Cola's marketing team faced several challenges while creating the "Share a Coke" campaign. One of the main challenges was to create a campaign that would appeal to a wide range of customers, including young and old, men and women, and people from different ethnic backgrounds. The team also had to come up with a way to increase brand awareness and sales without appearing too commercial or pushy.

### **Thought Process**

The marketing team came up with the idea of printing individual names on Coca-Cola bottles and cans after conducting extensive research on customer behavior and preferences. The team discovered that customers were more likely to buy a product if it was personalized and unique to them. By printing individual names on Coca-Cola bottles and cans, the team hoped to create a sense of personal connection between the customer and the product.

### **Solution**

The "Share a Coke" campaign was launched in Australia in 2011 and later expanded to India in 2013. The campaign involved printing individual names on Coca-Cola bottles and cans and encouraging customers to share a Coke with someone whose name was on the bottle. The campaign was supported by a multi-channel marketing strategy, including TV commercials, social media campaigns, and experiential marketing events.

The marketing strategy adopted by Coca-Cola for the "Share a Coke" campaign was multi-faceted and comprehensive. The campaign was designed to engage customers through a variety of channels and touchpoints, including social media, experiential marketing, and traditional advertising.

The campaign began with a focus on social media, with Coca-Cola launching a dedicated website that allowed customers to personalize and order Coca-Cola bottles with their names on them. The website also featured social media integration, allowing customers to share their personalized bottles on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter.

In addition to the website, Coca-Cola also launched a series of TV commercials and print ads promoting the campaign. These ads featured catchy slogans and taglines, such as "Share a Coke with..." and "Friends Don't Let Friends Drink Coke Alone."

The company also invested heavily in experiential marketing, hosting events and pop-up stores in major cities around the world. These events allowed customers to create their own personalized Coca-Cola bottles and cans and participate in interactive experiences, such as photo booths and social media challenges.

Overall, Coca-Cola's marketing strategy for the "Share a Coke" campaign was designed to create a sense of excitement and engagement among customers. By leveraging social media, experiential marketing, and traditional advertising, the company was able to reach a wide audience and create a buzz around the campaign. The strategy was successful in driving sales and increasing brand awareness, making the campaign one of Coca-Cola's most successful marketing initiatives to date.

### **Expected Outcome**

The marketing team had several goals for the "Share a Coke" campaign. They hoped to increase brand awareness and loyalty,

engage customers, and ultimately increase sales. The team expected the campaign to be a huge success and had set high targets for sales and engagement.

### **Final Outcome**

The "Share a Coke" campaign was a massive success in both Australia and India. The campaign generated a lot of buzz and excitement among customers, leading to an increase in sales and brand awareness. In Australia, the campaign led to a 7% increase in sales, while in India, Coca-Cola's market share increased from 56.5% to 57.5%. The campaign also received several awards, including the Cannes Lions Grand Prix.

However, the campaign also faced some criticism and backlash. Some customers complained that their names were not printed on the bottles or cans, while others criticized the company for promoting an unhealthy product. The campaign also faced legal challenges, with some customers claiming that their privacy rights were violated by printing their names without their consent.

### **TEACHING NOTES: COCA-COLA'S "SHARE A COKE" CAMPAIGN**

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the role of personalized marketing in creating a unique value proposition for customers
- Analyze the effectiveness of experiential marketing in driving engagement and sales
- Explore the potential benefits and drawbacks of personalized marketing
- Evaluate the impact of the "Share a Coke" campaign on Coca-Cola's brand image and financial performance
- Apply the SERVQUAL gap analysis model to identify potential service gaps in marketing strategies

### **Discussion of the Case Material:**

The "Share a Coke" campaign was a huge success, with sales increasing by 30% during the campaign period in Australia. The campaign was later expanded to other markets, including India, where it helped to revive Coca-Cola's brand image and increase sales by 22%. The success of the campaign can be attributed to Coca-Cola's innovative marketing strategy, which combined personalization, experiential marketing, and influencer marketing.

- Personalization as a marketing strategy: The success of the "Share a Coke" campaign was largely due to its focus on personalization. What are some other examples of successful marketing campaigns that have used personalization as a strategy? What are the pros and cons of personalization in marketing?
- Multi-channel marketing: Coca-Cola used a range of marketing channels, including social media, experiential marketing, and influencer marketing, to promote the campaign. What are the benefits of using a multi-channel approach? Are there any risks or drawbacks to this approach?
- The role of timing in marketing: The "Share a Coke" campaign was launched at a time when Coca-Cola was facing declining sales and a negative brand image in some markets. How important is timing in marketing? Can a well-timed campaign help to revive a struggling brand?
- Measuring the success of a marketing campaign: Coca-Cola's sales increased by 30% in Australia and 22% in India during the campaign period. What are some other ways to measure the success of a marketing campaign? What are the limitations of using sales figures as a measure of success?

The campaign's success can also be attributed to Coca-Cola's multi-channel approach. The company used a range of marketing channels, including social media, experiential marketing, and influencer marketing, to promote the campaign. The company created a dedicated website and mobile app, which allowed consumers to personalize their bottles, share them on social media, and enter contests. The company also used experiential marketing, setting up pop-up stores and vending machines in public places, and partnering with popular celebrities and influencers.

The timing of the campaign was also important. The "Share a Coke" campaign was launched at a time when Coca-Cola was facing declining sales and a negative brand image in some markets. The campaign helped to revive the brand and create a positive buzz on social media. The campaign also helped to increase Coca-Cola's sales, with sales increasing by 30% in Australia and 22% in India during the campaign period.

In conclusion, the "Share a Coke" campaign was a highly successful marketing campaign that helped to create a more emotional connection between consumers and the Coca-Cola brand. The campaign was based on the idea of personalization, which has become an increasingly important aspect of marketing in the digital age. The campaign was promoted using a multi-channel approach, including social media, experiential marketing, and influencer marketing, which helped to create a positive buzz on social media and increase Coca-Cola's sales. The success of the campaign can be attributed to Coca-Cola's innovative marketing strategy, its focus on personalization, and its timing.

#### SWOT Analysis:

##### Strengths:

Coca-Cola's use of personalization and customization helped to create a sense of novelty and engagement among customers.

The campaign's multi-channel approach, including social media, experiential marketing, and influencer marketing, helped to reach a wider audience.

The campaign helped to revive Coca-Cola's sales and brand image in India after a period of decline.

##### Weaknesses:

The campaign's focus on personalization may have been limited to certain segments of the target audience who value customization.

The cost of printing individual names on bottles and cans may have been prohibitive, which could limit the scalability of the campaign.

##### Opportunities:

Coca-Cola can continue to innovate and create engaging campaigns that resonate with its target audience.

The success of the campaign can inspire other brands to adopt similar strategies to promote engagement and brand loyalty.

##### Threats:

Competitors may also adopt similar personalization and customization strategies, making it difficult for Coca-Cola to differentiate itself in the market.

The novelty factor of personalization may wear off over time, leading to declining interest among customers.

The "Share a Coke" campaign was highly successful, and as such, there were many insights that Coca-Cola could gain from the campaign. One key insight was an improvement in ROI. By personalizing their products, Coca-Cola was able to differentiate itself from competitors and create a unique value proposition for customers. This, in turn, helped drive sales and increase profitability for the company.

Another important insight was a better understanding of the target audience. The campaign was specifically designed to appeal to millennials, who are known for valuing personalization and unique experiences. By focusing on this demographic, Coca-Cola was able to better understand their needs and preferences, and tailor its marketing efforts accordingly.

The campaign also helped Coca-Cola discover new opportunities for marketing and sales efforts. By leveraging social media and experiential marketing, the company was able to connect with customers in new and innovative ways, creating a sense of excitement and engagement that traditional advertising methods may not have been able to achieve.

In terms of SEO and keyword opportunities, Coca-Cola was able to leverage the popularity of the campaign to boost its online presence. By optimizing its website and social media channels for the campaign keywords, the company was able to improve its search engine rankings and attract more traffic to its website.

While the "Share a Coke" campaign was highly successful, there may have been some service gaps in the strategy. For example, some customers may have felt that the campaign was too commercial and pushy, or that it promoted an unhealthy product.

Additionally, the legal challenges faced by the campaign raised questions about the ethics and privacy issues involved in personalized marketing.

To address these service gaps, Coca-Cola could have conducted a SERVQUAL gap analysis to identify areas where the campaign fell short of customer expectations. This could have helped the company develop a more customer-centric marketing strategy, addressing customer needs and concerns more effectively.

The SERVQUAL gap analysis model is a tool that helps organizations identify gaps between customer expectations and perceptions of service quality. By using this model, Coca-Cola could have gained a better understanding of how customers perceived the "Share a Coke" campaign, and where the campaign fell short in meeting their expectations.

One gap that may have been identified by the SERVQUAL model is the gap between customer expectations and perceived service quality. Some customers may have had high expectations for the campaign, expecting a personalized experience that was tailored to their needs and preferences. However, if they felt that the campaign was too commercial or pushy, they may have been disappointed with the overall experience.

Another potential gap that could have been identified is the gap between management perceptions and customer expectations. The marketing team may have believed that the campaign was a great success, based on factors such as increased sales and market share. However, if customers felt that the campaign was too commercial or pushy, or that it promoted an unhealthy product, the management's perception of the campaign's success may have been misguided.

To address these gaps, Coca-Cola could have conducted customer surveys or focus groups to gain a better understanding of customer perceptions and expectations. This information could have then been used to develop a more customer-centric marketing strategy, addressing customer needs and concerns more effectively.

Overall, while the "Share a Coke" campaign was highly successful, there may have been some service gaps in the strategy. By using the SERVQUAL gap analysis model, Coca-Cola could have gained a better understanding of customer perceptions and expectations, and developed a more customer-centric marketing strategy to address any gaps that were identified.

### **Success or Failure?**

While the "Share a Coke" campaign was undoubtedly a success in terms of increasing sales and brand awareness, it also faced some criticism and backlash. The campaign's success can be attributed to several factors, including the personalization and uniqueness of the product, the multi-channel marketing strategy, and the emotional connection it created between the customer and the brand.

However, the campaign's flaws and criticisms cannot be ignored. The campaign was criticized for promoting an unhealthy product.

The campaign was criticized for promoting an unhealthy product, and some customers felt that the company was being too commercial and pushy. The legal challenges also raised questions about the ethics and privacy issues involved in the campaign.

Despite these criticisms, the "Share a Coke" campaign was a significant success for Coca-Cola. The campaign helped the company connect with its customers in a unique and engaging way, and it generated a lot of positive buzz and excitement. The campaign's success can be seen in the increase in sales and market share, as well as the numerous awards and accolades it received.

### **CONCLUSION**

The "Share a Coke" campaign was a unique and innovative marketing campaign that helped Coca-Cola connect with its customers and increase brand awareness and sales. While the campaign faced some criticisms and challenges, its overall success cannot be denied. The campaign's personalization and emotional connection with customers made it a huge success, and it continues to be a popular marketing campaign for Coca-Cola today.

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