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### Pepsi vs. Cola

The rivalry of surgery drinks has been present for decades. From the beginning, advertisements were the best way to outshine the competitors and convince consumers which product was the best. With the advancement of technology, companies have been able to achieve far more creative and aesthetically pleasing advertisements, to capture the audience's attention. The popular soda brand, Coca-Cola originated in 1892 and became one of the top-selling brands in the supermarket. The reason for Coca-Cola's success was due to their concept of consumers enjoying the brand, not the product. A few years later in 1898, the Pepsi-Cola drink was created. This sweet treat took on a very similar taste to their elder Coca-Cola. The two brands have been competing with one another for more than a century.

The two brands' history runs deeper than most people know. By the time Pepsi-Cola began producing the drink, Coca-Cola had been selling one million gallons per year. As the Coca-Cola brand was far more popular in the early 1900s, the drink gained endorsements from professional athletes, major companies, and even expanded to Europe. On the other side, Pepsi-Cola was finally breaking ground and selling more than 100,000 gallons per year. However, luck changed for Pepsi-Cola in 1924 as the company fell into bankruptcy due to the sugar rationing put in place during World War II. Yet, Coca-Cola remains to thrive. In the mid-1900s both brands began to sell their soda in cans, rather than bottles. This allowed for faster production and more profit. It is here that advertising for the soda companies became

crucial. The marketing became focused around World War II efforts, as Pepsi-Cola changed their branding to Red, White, and Blue in support of the troops at war. In the early 1950s, both brands moved toward television advertisement campaigns. A monumental step forward for Coca-Cola was its first television commercial running during a half-hour CBS special on Thanksgiving Day. Knowing the mass amounts of people watching across the United States, Coca-Cola knew it was perfect timing. As time progressed to the late 20th and early 21st century, the two brands began creating advertisements and campaigns that directly targeted one another and made the rivalry clear.

Christmas and Halloween are always two very important times for companies. The possibility for creativity is endless and each brand adopted its own mascots and traditions for the seasons. During the 2013 Halloween season, Pepsi-Cola released an ad (left) that illustrated the iconic red, white, and blue can draped in a crimson red cape, with the Coca-Cola signature down the side. Sitting on a rock covered in moss, the words “We wish you a scary Halloween!” rest above the dressed can. This was a great advertising move as it portrayed the concept that Coca-Cola was terrifying and liking Coca-Cola’s drink was scary. It is important to acknowledge that on the cape, the words do not read Coca-Cola, but rather, “Cola-Coca.” This was not done by accident. This action was taken to avoid legal consequences.

The Coca-Cola response to the Pepsi-Cola advertisement was one of the greatest marketing moves. Not only did they gain attention for their product, but Coca-Cola also sparked audience interest. The Coca-Cola team decided to take the exact same picture that was used by Pepsi-Cola and create a response advertisement. Something surprising included in the Coca-Cola advertisement was the use of the misspelled brand. Coca-Cola kept Pepsi-Cola’s “Cola-Coca” as a power move. The brand decided to do this to signify that Coca-Cola is so well known, and

loved by so many, the need to change the Can's costume even a little was unnecessary. The change made to the advertisement that makes all the difference was what is written above the can. Rather than Pepsi-Cola's saying, Coca-Cola wrote, "Everybody wants to be a hero!" This is such a smart and witty way to respond to a direct-attack advertisement. Rather than even acknowledging Pepsi-Cola referring to Coca-Cola as "scary", the older brand took the cape and associated it with a superhero. Dressing as a superhero is a costume that is seen everywhere each year due to its popularity and simplicity. Coca-Cola's advertisement signifies that Pepsi-Cola wishes it could be the hero that everyone adores.

Though the advertisements are similar in more ways than not, it is important to take into account the way they are different. Beyond the difference in the phrase above the can, the approach to the Pepsi-Cola can is different. Pepsi-Cola addressed the can as a character who found Coca-Cola to be far too scary to drink. The approach Coca-Cola had in response, was signifying itself as the hero. It took on the role of portraying the brand over the product once again, letting consumers know Coca-Cola brings you happiness.

The target audience was reached by the companies because the brands utilized Aristotle's "modes of persuasion". This concept theorized by the famous philosopher is the usage of all the rhetorical elements; ethos logos and pathos. These three are the means of persuading others into believing a desired point of view. Most commonly found in speech writing, both Pepsi-Cola and Coca-Cola took use of the idea in the advertisements.

Pathos was largely used in both advertisements. The feelings that consumer audiences were left with after viewing Pepsi-Cola's advertising compared to the response Coca-Cola gave, were different in a number of ways. Given the Pepsi-Cola advertisement was seen first by the public, it could be viewed as something enticing. Consumers wondered if Coca-Cola would

release a response, and felt humor through Pepsi-Cola's advertisement. When Coca-Cola released its response, consumers felt shocked and like there was a sense of tension. Though there was a similar response of humor found in the Coca-Cola response as well.

Ethos was also used on a smaller scale in each advertisement. Coca-Cola prides itself on being the brand you know and the brand you love. The credibility that Coca-Cola soda holds is arguably more than that of Pepsi-Cola, given their histories. Coca-Cola is older and has never gone bankrupt. Pepsi-Cola has endured that situation twice and is a younger brand. It is common that customers feel as though they are aware of Coca-Cola's idea of putting the brand before the product. Consumers know that they are drinking more than a soda, they are drinking the smiling polar bear, friendly Santa Clause, and in this advertisement, the superhero. Pepsi lacked some ethical aspects of ethos when they released the advertisement in the first place. Pepsi-Cola advertising has a longer history of releasing anti-Coca-Cola campaigns. The two brands' advertising strategies of manipulating and competing by direct attacks always prompt the question of is it ethical. However, though it may seem unnecessary or unethical, both Pepsi-Cola and Coca-Cola generate positive feedback from audiences as consumers become invested in what brand will do next and how the other will respond.

Found in both advertisements, is the use of logos. The brands put a great deal of logic into constricting how the advertisements should look, in order to appeal to consumers. This rhetorical element is found in the lettering above the can in both campaigns. To first evaluate Pepsi-Cola's use of logos in the advertisement one must look at the structure of the text. The tone of the phrase, "We wish you a scary Halloween!" is upbeat, with small notes of snark as the company has every intent to poke fun at their competitor. The one, simple sentence approach was well thought out by the marketing team. It is not hard to read or decipher, allowing for mass

amounts of consumer appeal. As per Coca-Cola's response, there was definitely time and thought put in as they wanted to create the perfect comeback. The saying on Coca-Cola's advertisement sounds as if it is an older sibling responding to the younger. It is witty and sophisticated, while still maintaining a humorous appeal.

Given that the two advertisements were made for the same purpose but for different companies, they are very similar. The brands knew they were appealing to the same audience demographics. Firstly, are the soda drinkers. This demographic has grown to be so popular with the increase of sugary drinks available in the United States. However, the audience becomes more niche between the two as you have consumers who are passionate about which of the two is better. Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola are two of the most popular soda drinks and taste the most similar. With this, there was always the natural rivalry. When both companies were in full production, releasing billions of gallons a year, consumers began to pick their favorite and defend it to the extreme. This had an everlasting effect on the companies as their goal became to ensure the continued support from their interest demographics. In addition, children were the second focus group the advertisements were interested in. The original and the response were released just prior to Halloween, during peak party-planning and buying season. Most children find soda to be a sweet treat that they yearn for. Companies know this and so by draping the Pepsi-Cola can in a superhero cape, they could capture the attention of the children even more

Jib Fowles was a professor of media studies who cultivated a list of the fifteen basic appeals that are found in advertising. Out of the fifteen, three are found in both Pepsi-Cola and Coca-Cola's advertisements. The need for affiliation is found in the advertisements as it is an appeal to remain loyal to a friend. The two brands are fighting to keep their supporters on their side. Thus, the phrases above the soda can are appealing to the companies' target audience as

well as letting the opposing brand's consumers know they "are not as good." The need for aesthetic sensations is also prevalent in the advertisements. Given they are the same picture, viewers can look and feel a sense of relaxation. The calming rocks in the background, the sense of peace associated with the woods all contribute to the consumers wanting a refreshing sip of their Cola. Finally, the physiological needs. This is the appeal to human's desire for food, drinks, and sleep. The setting and photography done for these advertisements makes the temptation to drink the consumers preferred soda that much higher. It also creates a sense of wonder for those who have never tasted Coca-Cola or Pepsi-Cola, drawing them in to become new customers.

What must be decided after intense analysis of both advertisements is; which company did a better job? When focusing on which brand utilized the rhetorical elements as well as the basic appeals with a higher success rate, it is in my opinion that Coca-Cola won this battle. Coca-Cola had to provide a response to another company attacking their own, and did it flawlessly. Coca-Cola appealed more to the audience in an upbeat way, almost as if they were not acknowledging Pepsi-Cola's original attack. I did, however, think that Pepsi-Cola's original idea was very creative and fit the spirit of Halloween. Yet, I think Coca-Cola wanted to take on the role of proving they are the older, wiser brand.

Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola have a deep-rooted history that has been present for centuries. Through the back and forth battles, audiences have been able to favor sides and determine who won the face-off. Sugary drinks have become so prevalent in society across the globe. What started as just two soda companies have developed into Soda Conglomerates. As for the marketing strategies for the brands, Coca-Cola was creative in their response to Pepsi-Cola, and appealed to audiences through more uses of tone. For these reasons, Coca-Cola created a better advertisement.



Original ad

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