

Beverages as lifestyle brands

by Interbrand Creative Director Jamey Wagner and Associate Creative Director Steve Leder

Are you a **Dunkin' Donuts**, **McDonald's** or **Starbucks** coffee drinker; a **Coke** or **Pepsi** devotee; a **Guinness** or **Budweiser** aficionado? Increasingly, consumers' beverages of choice are identified with particular lifestyles, and brands market themselves accordingly.

Lifestyle branding comes naturally to high-involvement brands that connect to consumers through touchpoints. **Abercrombie & Fitch**, **Pottery Barn** and **BMW** have successfully marketed themselves as more than just a clothing company, furniture store or car. Brands attain lifestyle status when they transform themselves from products into an essential part of our lives, a representation of the way we live, a symbol of who we are and what we believe in.

Most consumers aren't able to discern subtle, formulation differences among competing beverage brands in a category, be it coffee, tea, soft drinks or water. Yet current beverage marketing typically stresses the unique attributes of each brand – as well as that of the consumers who drink it. Let's look at how beverage brands are marketing themselves to appeal to different consumer lifestyles.

Gatorade was developed to hydrate athletes in the hot Florida sun and has become one of the world's most recognisable

brands, creating a category that is synonymous with athletes and sports. The need to improve performance has morphed into a lifestyle that millions of consumers relate to – and who purchase Gatorade. To reinforce its lifestyle brand status among target consumers, Gatorade manages and leverages its brand equities across touch points, all of the time. For example, the packaging for Gatorade's newest offering, The G Series (www.gatorade.com), features the brand's iconic typography and lightning bolt reinforced by the functional claims of Prime, Performance and Recover.

Compare Gatorade's branding approach to that of Vitamin Water (www.vitaminwater.com). Vitamin Water is not about sports and athletes; it is simply about 'hydration for every occasion.' Through witty, on-pack copywriting, the brand focuses on helping consumers achieve a healthy lifestyle through "vitamins + water = all you need."

Continuing in the branded water category, **Panablue's** deep-sea water product, **SURE** (www.surestyle.co.kr), positions itself as a healthy lifestyle brand, appealing to the Korean company's target market of female consumers in their 20s and 30s. Interbrand's Seoul office created SURE's brand strategy, name, label and bottle design based on the concept 'The precious water for my life.' The Interbrand-designed package for this premium water brand features a nontraditional, feminine, pink and purple label; while the bottle's curved design echoes a woman's body shape and provides a comfortable hand grip for women.



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In the tea category, **BOS Ice-Tea** (www.bosicetea.com) cheekily positions itself as a brand of choice for consumers committed to an organic lifestyle. BOS Ice-Tea is made from organic Rooibos tea that is grown ethically, in an environmentally sustainable and socially mindful way, on the Klipopmekaar Rooibos Tea Farm and Private Nature Reserve in South Africa. BOS teas are blended with 'all-natural fruit flavours and ancient ingredients' and are free of caffeine, preservatives, colourants and additives. The BOS brand positions itself as cool, contemporary ('big on taste, up on entertainment and wired for wellness') and socially responsible. Its slim, pop art cans feature potent African



mythology and rich symbolism to articulate its message.

Lifestyle brands carry social importance and influence purchase decisions because consumers seek to define themselves through the eyes of others. Your image as an athlete, naturalist or trendsetter can be created or reinforced by the beverage you are drinking, as others subconsciously judge you at the moment of consumption.

The companies in this article are crafting their product messaging and packaging to leverage the power of lifestyle branding. By doing so, they are overcoming the inherent challenges of a low-involvement category to distinguish themselves from competitors and achieve high levels of consumer loyalty. ■

