

## CHAPTER CASE STUDY: The Coca-Cola Company

They have over one million likes on Facebook, over 800,000 followers on Twitter, over 8,000,000 views on YouTube, and over 20,000 followers on Instagram. Ninety-four percent of people can recognize their iconic red and white logo. But none of that is too surprising given that the Coca-Cola Company is the world's largest beverage company, featuring 3,800+ products worldwide spanning across 20 brands.

The Coca-Cola Company has been in business for over 130 years. Established in 1886 in Atlanta, Georgia by John Pemberton, the Coca-Cola Company's daily average servings in their first year were just 9 people. Now, their products sell in over 200 countries, and their daily average servings are 1.9 billion people.

"The Coca-Cola Company is steeped in history and tradition, where heritage is honored and values are respected. We are a global family of people working together to bring your family a wide array of beverage choices to meet your beverage needs every day," says Coca-Cola on their website. "The Coca-Cola Company is dedicated to offering safe, quality beverages, marketing those beverages responsibly and providing information consumers can trust. The Coca-Cola Company has always taken seriously its commitment to market responsibly, across the globe, across all advertising media, and across all of our beverages."

With that in mind, the Coca-Cola Company adopted a strict marketing policy in September 2015. The policy, which covers all their beverages, states that no products will be directly marketed to children under 12.

The Responsible Marketing Policy, which is available on the company's website, states that the company will avoid

advertising in "all media which directly targets children under 12, including television shows, print media, websites, social media, movies, and SMS/email marketing." They consider media directly targeted toward children if 35 percent or more of the audience is composed of children under 12.

The policy also states that no marketing communications will be designed to directly appeal to children under 12. Specifically, communications created after the adoption of the policy will not use "celebrities or characters whose primary appeal is to children under the age of 12 (with the exception of brand equity characters already in use), movie tie-ins related to movies of primary appeal to children under 12, games or contests designed to appeal primarily to children under 12, branded toys whose primary appeal is to children under 12, images of our products being consumed by children under 12 without an adult, branded sponsorship of sporting and entertainment events which primarily target children under 12."

Finally, in a full commitment not to advertise to children under 12, the policy says, "As a global business, we respect and recognize the unique learning environment of school and believe in commercial-free classrooms. We will not commercially advertise in primary schools." Coca-Cola products are also not available for sale in primary schools, unless requested by a school authority. These school guidelines apply to schools not only in the United States but also in Europe, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia.

The Responsible Marketing Policy was adopted amid growing complaints that Coca-Cola was partly to blame for the rise in childhood obesity in America.

Sources: The Coca-Cola Company, "Coca-Cola At A Glance," *Coca-Cola*, accessed October 21, 2016, <http://www.coca-colacompany.com/our-company/infographic-coca-cola-at-a-glance>; The Coca-Cola Company, "Responsible Marketing," *Coca-Cola*, September 20, 2016, accessed October 21, 2016, <http://www.coca-colacompany.com/stories/responsible-marketing>; The Coca-Cola Company, "Who We Are," *Coca-Cola*, accessed October 21, 2016, <http://www.coca-colacompany.com/careers/who-we-are-infographic>.