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National College of Art and Design

Department of Visual Communication

"The Advertising and Marketing of Coca-Cola"

by

Julie Embleton

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INTRODUCTION

"Coke is it !": the American dream, a lifestyle, fun, refreshment and of course, success. Coke is all this and more. Why? What is it about this brown-coloured, fizzy liquid that makes it the world's most popular and widely available soft drink? The answer is success through design; effective, relentless promotion; quality packaging, and a strong image. The Coca-Cola company oozes success. Rigid standards and loyalty to the consumer have been the foundations of this success. Coke has worked its way steadily from its humble beginnings in an Atlanta pharmacy to the peak position in the soft-drinks market. The history of the drink and its company is a history of commitment to design fundamentals.

My aim in this thesis is to show just how Coca-Cola became such a phenomenal success. I will show how Coca-Cola has become a worldwide megabrand through careful advertising, promotion and image construction. Published material on Coca-Cola deals mainly with the history of the company, but material dealing with advertising and the actual advertisements themselves is unobtainable. Comparative material for companies such as Pepsi-Cola is also unobtainable. Therefore, I intend to show, through this historical structure, how the company became so successful. Also, by analyzing advertisements available from the particular periods, I will explain how the company created and continued to push the image of Coke as an essential part of the American dream.

The company's reaction to competition and a keen eye on the changing moods of society all contributed to Coke's success, and I will also discuss these matters.

Chapter One is a brief history of the birth of Coca-Cola as a drink, a trademark, and a company. The chapter deals with early market strategies, along with some examples of early advertisements. Also discussed is the revolutionary plan to bottle Coke.

Chapter Two deals with the introduction of a uniform Coke bottle and a close look is taken at its design and the changes that have occurred to it over the years.

The new Coke bottle meant that the advertisements had to go through some changes and these changes are discussed in Chapter Three. The Second World War provided an otherwise distant opportunity for the company to expand distribution on a worldwide scale. During this time, patriotic posters were in abundance and some of these will be analyzed.

Pepsi-Cola, one of Coke's main rivals were gaining a strong hold on the market during the 'fifties. Coca-Cola's reaction to this competition was often slow and conservative. This conservatism caused major problems for the company. These issues will be dealt with also in Chapter three.

Chapter Four deals with the massive changes that were initiated by 'Project Arden' in 1970. This project was a response to competition and a changing society. This chapter also deals with the Coca-Cola trademark and its alterations since its creation in 1886. The period of the 1970's in Coke's history also saw the introduction of segmented marketing, which proved to be successful for the company. In time, this approach was to highlight the need for the company to create more products in the Coke range. In particular, two magazine advertisements from the 1980's are analyzed with regard to their targeted market audience.

Chapter Five deals with the design of the products in the Megabrand range. 'New' Coke, a marketing blunder and a lesson in consumer loyalty, is also discussed briefly.

Finally, Chapter Six is a summary of the 'ingredients' involved in the success of Coca-Cola. At this stage I will also take a brief look at some of the new Coca-Cola advertising.

CHAPTER ONE

The birth of Coca-Cola as a drink, a trademark and a company.

This chapter gives a brief history of the beginnings of Coca-Cola. It discusses the creation of the drink and the trademark, while also showing examples of early advertisements relating to the advertising strategy adopted in the first years. Included also is a discussion of the introduction of bottled Coke onto the market in an attempt to end the problems being caused by imitators of the soft drink.

The sources for this history are from the various books as listed below. Due to the way this history has been compiled from the various books, it is not possible for me to cite in each instance the author or source, without disrupting the fluidity of the sentences.

BAYLEY Stephen: Designing a megabrand.

PRENDERGAST Mark: For God, Country and Coca-Cola.

GRAHAM Bill: 'There will always be Coca-Cola'

HOT PRESS: August 1993.

Printed material on the history of the Coca-Cola company in Ireland and America, courtesy of Coca-Cola Ireland, Harcourt Street, Dublin.

The birth of a soft drink.

John Styth Pemberton, born in 1833 was an experimental pharmacist. He was inspired by Samuel Thompson, a fellow pharmacist, who had led a revolt in earlier years against the vicious bloodletting of professional medicine.

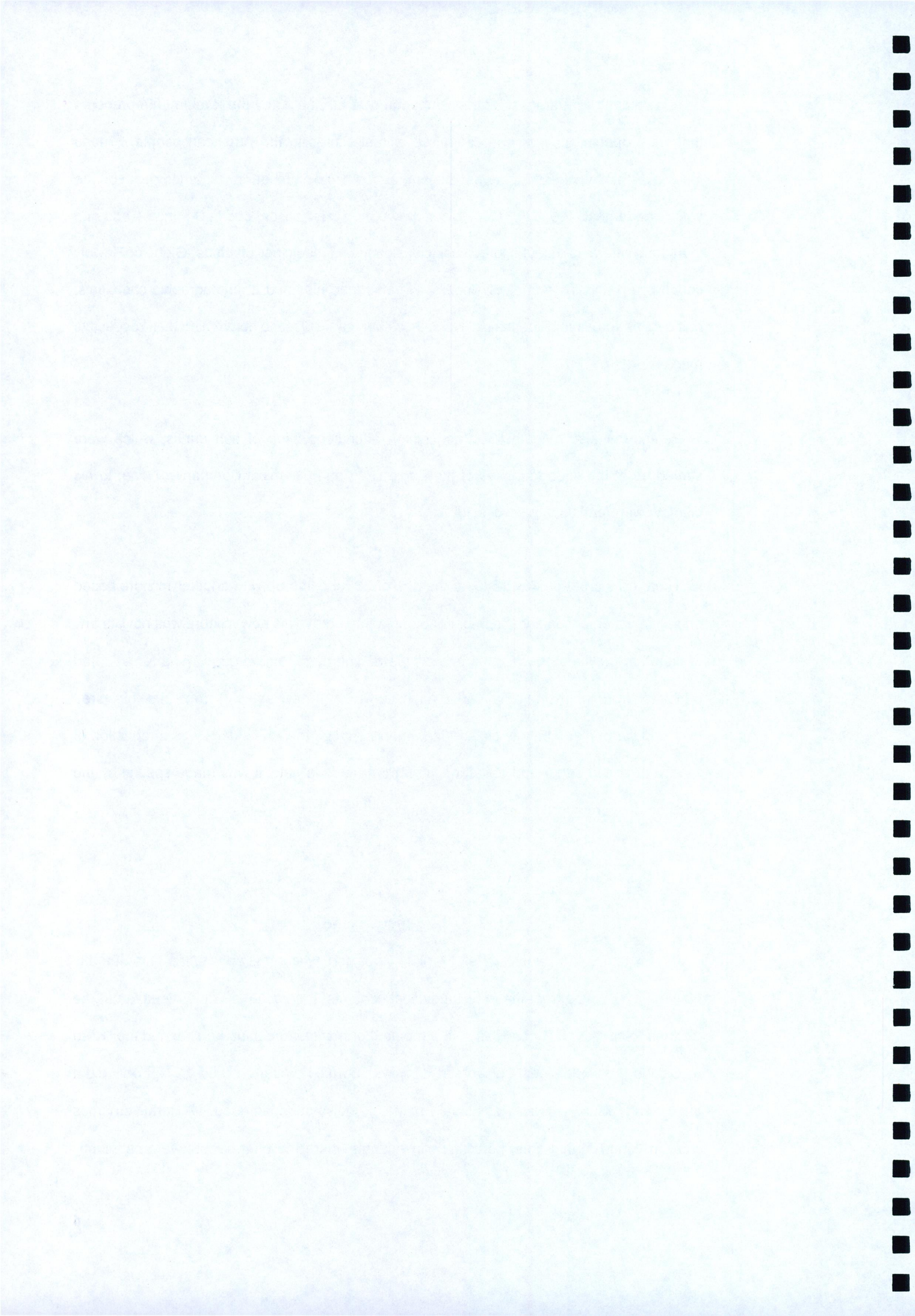
According to Prendergast, John Pemberton was fascinated by the foreign entrepreneurs that were opening up no-hope, 'pain-free' miracle cures to the American people. These 'business' men were earning money faster than most and Pemberton wanted to get in on the act. (Prendergast, 1993, pg. 12) He set up two drug businesses, one in Columbus and one in Atlanta, where he manufactured suspicious sounding medicines, such as "Globe of Flower" cough syrup and "Extract of Styllinger". He also tried his hand at photographic chemicals, hair dye, perfumes and cosmetics. None, however, came close to dominating their respective markets.

Pemberton also manufactured concoction after concoction of soft drinks, which were served up at the soda fountains of the Eagle Drug and Chemical Company. None, to his dismay, were particularly successful.

Then, on the 8th of May 1886, at the age of 36 he came up with another mixture based on sugar, water, cocoa and a number of other ingredients. This new mixture was not like any of his other previous ones for the one simple reason that it tasted good. The formula had originated from the recipe of an earlier drink known as "French Wine of Coco", itself inspired by a popular drink of the day called Vin Mariani. Pemberton's new drink was a reduction of wine with added sugar and a liquid extract from the kola nut. It was made special by the addition of secret ingredients.

The famous name.

It was Pemberton's bookkeeper, Frank M Robinson, who came up with the name for this new drink. Derived from the drink's principal contents, the cocoa leaf and the kola nut, he decided to christen it "Coca-Kola". In a moment of marketing genius he changed the "K" to a "C" and the world's best known soft drink was born. Pemberton liked it. Not only did it state clearly what his drink was actually made of, it also sounded good. Alliterative names were in vogue at that time, particularly in Atlanta, where the pharmacists were constantly



battling for a piece of the market. Triple and quadruple alliterations were in abundance - "Botanic Blood Balm", "Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Purgative Pellets", "Swifts Sure Specific", to name a few. (Prendergast, 1993, pg. 32)

Although Robinson noted that the name indicated the ingredients, the Coca-Cola company later had good reason to emphasize the alliterative and poetic, rather than descriptive, character of the name. At the time, pharmacists were free to put whatever substances they liked into their concoctions. No one ever approached them about their 'interesting' ingredients because they weren't rigidly checked and controlled like today. Because of this, pharmacists like Pemberton would have laced their mixtures with ingredients that contained alcoholic or stimulative hallucinogenic properties. The fact that the name stemmed from the ingredients inspired many Coca-Cola lawyers to write briefs arguing the opposite. In 1959, the company simply referred to it as a meaningless but fanciful and alliterative name. So, although there is no written proof of the cocoa extraction process, people still speculate that up until around 1903, when it was decided to decocainize the coca leaves, Coke actually contained cocaine.

The trademark.

Frank Robinson, aided by the engraver Frank Ridge, also wrote the trademark in his own copperplate style hand writing. Then, he added a short copyline - "*Delicious and refreshing*" - creating also the world's most effective copyline. To this day the famous logo has barely changed.

Early marketing strategies.

Once the name and trademark were decided on, Pemberton set about developing a marketing strategy for his new soft drink. This brown-coloured, pleasant-tasting drink would relieve headaches, nervous afflictions, neuralgia, hysteria and melancholia. It was also reputed to be a cure for the after effects of excessive alcohol consumption.

Fig.1: Early ad claiming curative properties.

THE IDEAL BRAIN TONIC.

A DELIGHTFUL SUMMER AND WINTER BEVERAGE !



J. HALL BOBBITT,
PHARMACIST.

Eaton, N. C., March 15, 1892.
Coca-Cola has had a big run at my fountain and is gaining in popularity all the time. A line of soda drinks is incomplete without it. Coca-Cola has come to stay.
Yours truly,
J. HALL BOBBITT.

SIMPSON & SON,
DRUGGISTS
ANDERSON, S. C.

We have had surprising success in the sale of Coca-Cola. We opened a new soda fountain in May, 1891, and dispensed 110 gallons during the remainder of the season. Expect an immense business this year.
Yours truly,
SIMPSON & SON.



SAM B. WATERS,
CONFECTIONER.

NEW BORN, N. C., Jan. 25, 1892.
It is unnecessary to say anything in praise of Coca-Cola. It speaks for itself, and will more than double the sales of any soda fountain, that dispenses it according to directions. When they put in too much of the Coca, it destroys the good taste and effect. Follow directions and it will do all claimed for it.
Yours truly,
SAM B. WATERS.

Coca-Cola

TRADE MARK



J. B. DAVENPORT,
Druggist.

ANDERSON, GA., March 4, 1891.
My customers were so delighted with Coca-Cola last year I determined to make it my leader. Have just received my first barrel and have it opening up splendidly. My advice to Southern druggists is, adopt Coca-Cola as your leader and you will have a drink that possesses real merit and one it is no more to dispute, because it has all that is claimed for it.
Yours truly,
J. B. DAVENPORT.

1890. 1891.
188 Gallons. 241 Gallons.

OFFICE OF
DAVID W. CURRY,
WHOLESALE
DRUGGIST
PROPRIETOR
Curry's Liver Compound, Curry's
Candy Vermifuge, &c.

ROWE, GA.,
Nov. 19, 1890.
We sold your Coca-Cola during the past season with a constantly increasing demand. We look for a large demand another year.
With kind regards,
Yours truly,
D. W. CURRY.



J. P. BALLARD, Druggist.

1890. 1891.
115 Gallons. 212 Gallons.
EATON, GA., Feb. 7, 1891.
It has often been stated by persons visiting our little city that I have the best patronized soda fountain for any town of the size in the State, and it gives me great pleasure to say that I attribute my success largely to the addition of Coca-Cola, which I consider the most meritorious drink now being dispensed.
Yours very truly,
J. P. BALLARD.

For Headache & Exhaustion

AT SODA FOUNTAINS.



Fig.2: Early ad, 1892 aimed at the soft-drink market.

The first Coca-Cola was sold in an Atlanta soda fountain for 5 cents. The advertising was simple - an oil cloth banner was hung outside the soda fountain shop - and the total budget for the first year was only \$46. Sales were a measly 25 gallons of the syrup. This unsuccessful start left Pemberton demoralised. He was a bad businessman and a serious morphine addict. The year 1872 had seen him bankrupt and, try as he did, he could never acquire enough money to support his family. Finally, dejected and ill, he died in 1888, after selling his business to Asa Candler for \$2,300.

A strict puritan workaholic, Candler began to promote Coca-Cola once more, along with some of his own products. Although he was aware of the precise ingredients in Pemberton's drink, he honoured his memory by keeping it a secret. Today, the Coca-Cola company can thank Candler as its ancestor. He was the man who established the business and was responsible for keeping the formula secret. Candler kept a record of Pemberton's formula and this is how it looks:

Merchandise No.1 : Sugar

Merchandise No.2 : Caramel

Merchandise No.3 : Caffeine

Merchandise No.4 : Phosphoric Acid

Merchandise No.5 : Coco Leaves

Merchandise No 7x : Flavourings.

Candler soon discovered the potential of Pemberton's beverage and began to create new advertisements announcing the beneficial results of drinking Coca-Cola. At first the advertising targeted two markets: pure soft-drinks and then, in the other ads, its more dubious curing qualities were proclaimed. Figures 1 & 2, on the opposite page, are examples of the advertising in question. Figure 1 deals with the curative qualities, claiming medicinal properties by printing the opinions of 'highly regarded' pharmacists, druggists and confectioners of the day. Figure 2 is aimed at the other market, simply stating that Coke is 'Delicious and Refreshing'.

Fig.3: Hot, Tired, Thirsty? Date unknown.



Fig.4: Engraved Coke Glasses which evolved from the flare to the bell shape. 1900-1920.

Under the competent hand of Candler's management the sales rocketed. Bayley writes that by 1892 it was decided that the Coca-Cola company was to be incorporated in Georgia, with an authorized capital stock of \$100,000. Along with this, an advertising budget of \$12,000 was decided on for the first year. (Bayley, 1986,pg. 20)

One of the earliest advertising strategies of the company was to encourage customer loyalty. Adverts were created stating that if you were thirsty, Coke would quench your thirst. There was no fuss, just a clear, simple statement. The advert on the opposite page (Fig. 3) illustrates this point. Three questions are asked; Hot? Tired? Thirsty? One solution is given: 'Drink Coca-Cola'. The price at 5 cents is advertised, along with the added advantage that Coke is widely available. In this advert, the woman is shown drinking from a glass engraved with the Coke logo. These glasses had been making an appearance in most of the ads, so the company decided to introduce them at the soda fountains to help encourage sales and promote the drink (Fig. 4). Now Coke drinkers could refresh themselves with their favourite drink in a custom-made glass. The advertising strategies and merchandising were proving successful. By 1895, three years after the formation of the company, Candler could confidently claim that:

"Coca-Cola is now sold and drunk in every state in the United States of America."

Early difficulties.

However, this rapidly increasing distribution and success brought problems. Candler was aware from the start that the actual name "Coca-Cola" was as great an asset as the secret ingredients. Pharmacists, envious of the success, were trying to get in on the game. Beverages soon started appearing in the soda fountains, sounding suspiciously like Coca-Cola. Years before Candler had wisely decided to register Coca-Cola as a trademark, but this did not stop the other entrepreneurs from cashing in on Coca-Cola's popularity. At the

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

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company's Annual General Meeting in 1895 Candler was advised to consult an attorney on the subject of these imitators and to bring suits against all involved.

At this time it must be noted that the company only owned Pemberton's formula for the syrup and Robinson's trademark. This meant that the company was really only operating a franchise system whereby it sold the syrup to soda fountains and then supported the soda fountains with its effective advertising. Because of this the threat of losing business was always near, so flagrant imitators would have to be dealt with. Suggestions had been made concerning a uniform package design, but Candler refused. He could possibly have been afraid that concentrating on a new package would mean that the quality of the drink would suffer. Whatever his reason, he decided instead that there would be a new addition to the copyline. It now read: *"Call for it by full name, nicknames encourage substitution"*. (1895)

Bottling Coca-Cola.

Sales were still on the increase when another problem arose. Candler and the soda fountain operators had become aware that serving from the fountain meant that people had to come there to drink Coca-Cola. It was common sense to presume that if the drink could be brought to them sales would increase. During the late 1890's, an operator, Joseph A Biedenharn, from Mississippi, came up with the perfect solution - put the syrup and the carbonated water into a bottle. This would mean that more Coca-Cola could now be distributed to places which previously couldn't be reached. The more Coca-Cola they would sell, the more profit they would make. The soda fountain, although popular, had restricted distribution. The idea of bottling the drink was a revolutionizing idea. It was the initiative of bottling Coca-Cola, along with refinement of the franchise system, that opened the doors of success even wider for Coca-Cola.

This new franchising system was operated by Benjamin Franklin Thomas and Joseph Brown Whitehead, who also obtained the exclusive bottling rights for the entire U.S.A. These

Fig.5: Merchandising dating from 1899 to 1919. Included here are bookmarks, a calender and trays.



two men were aware of the workings of the American economy, so they created a system where the product was available everywhere and the bottlers were each given a life-long contract. This new contract informed them of their importance as members of the Coca-Cola company, from which they would all benefit. Sales continued to rise.

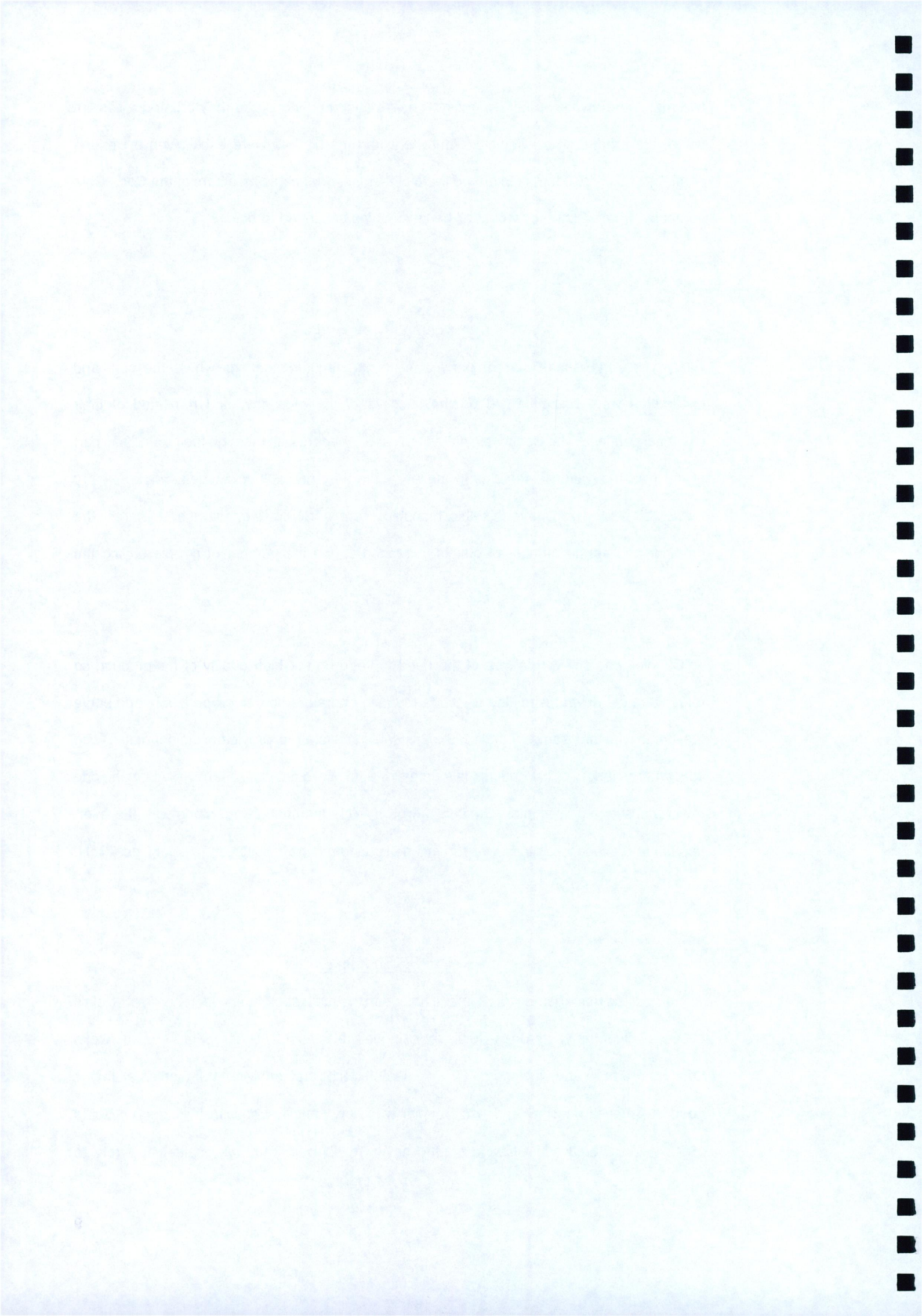
The company expands.

By 1899, the Coca-Cola company was holding regular meetings where the staff and distributors were being briefed on the success of the company, and reminded of their essential part in it. The Coca-Cola salesmen carried papers with them on their rounds as part of the new motivation research. In these papers they noted which outlets wouldn't carry Coca-Cola and why. Due to this salesmanship, more stores were encouraged to handle the product, and as the number of outlets increased so did the number of people buying the drink.

Candler was still very aware of the need to keep up the high quality of his product, so rules were set down instructing the soda fountain operators how to properly mix and serve the drink. In that same year (1899), the salesmen started providing the fountains with constant reminders of the nation's favourite soft drink: branded clocks, urns, glass mats, drip trays and even soda fountain furniture (Fig. 5). This merchandising, along with the ever-popular engraved Coke glass, was turning the soda fountains into little shrines for Coca-Cola.

Creating an image.

Scrupulous management of its image has been the main contributing factor in Coca-Cola's success. Over the years Coca-Cola's recurring theme is its relationship with America. Coke drinkers are pure and wholesome. That little bottle that they drink from embodies all that is good in American society and Asa Candler was very specific about this imagery. So, in 1908, when a bottler in Chicago started having difficulties with Coke sales, he wrote to



Candler telling him of how he was going to solve the problem by taking a slightly different direction with his advertising. His 'slightly' different ideas outraged Candler. On seeing the new ads, Candler feared for Coke's carefully sculpted "clean" image. Prendergast writes that Whitten, the desperate bottler, had started using overtly sexual advertising. One of his trays portrayed a young bare-breasted woman holding a bottle of Coke. Another ad showed a young woman dressed in black lingerie reclining on a tiger-skin rug with an expression of exhausted bliss. Beside her lay an empty Coke bottle and the copyline read "Satisfied". (Prendergast, 1993, pgs. 92/93). Needless to say, it wasn't just the Coke that had induced this state of satisfaction! It is clear why Candler was so shocked by these ads. This was not the image he wanted portrayed. Whitten was ordered to stop, and the ads were quickly withdrawn before serious damage could be done.

Although Candler was appalled by Whitten's ads, the beautiful young women that appeared in the authorized Coke ads were often suggestive in their own ways. While sipping their Cokes through straws, in a very lady-like fashion, they project a seductive "Come hither" look. Even though they were a lot more demure than Whitten's young ladies, they grabbed the public's attention. One calendar girl was a particular favourite with the men, while the women made every attempt to look like her. (Prendergast, 1993, pg. 93)

Fig.6: Variations of the Bottlers Coke bottles, 1906.



CHAPTER TWO

The creation of the Coca-Cola bottle and its design.

This chapter deals with the famous Coca-Cola bottle, introduced in 1916. Its design and the changes made to it over the years are also discussed.

As with Chapter one, the history in this chapter has been drawn from separate sources as listed previously. Where possible in this chapter, the sources have been cited.

The creation of the Coke bottle.

In 1914 Harold Hirsch, the company lawyer, was worried about the Coke bottle. The bottlers were using an assortment of bottles, each one bearing the bottler's name and the consumer was only able to recognise the drink by its trademark, which wasn't always too clear. All bottlers liked to have their names on their bottles and the name Coca-Cola usually just appeared on a paper label. The examples on the opposite page illustrate this point (Fig. 6). The four bottles each have a different shape and height. The Coca-Cola label appears on two bottles, but the other two have the logo embossed on the glass. The only common element is the Coke logo, and even this cannot be seen too clearly. In a nutshell, Coca-Cola was lacking a corporate identity, and so Harold Hirsch approached Candler about a new consistent package design.

Motivated by the obvious lack of uniformity, he felt the company would benefit from a distinct bottle. Once again, Coca-Cola drinkers would have something exclusive to them as

no other soft drink would be contained in a bottle like it. A design consultant, working with the company, was quoted as saying:

"We need a new bottle - a distinctive package that will help us to fight substitution. We need a bottle which a person will recognise as a Coca-Cola bottle - even when he feels it in the dark. The Coca-Cola bottle should be shaped so that even if broken, a person could tell what it was."

(Bayley, 1986, pg. 43)

So, after much thought, Candler urged Hirsch to write to the bottlers asking them to design a new uniform bottle for Coca-Cola. If successful, the bottle would be recognisable in any state in America. Then the bottle could be protected by trademark and a patent law, thus putting an end to the plagiarism by other soft-drink companies. This idea was especially pleasing to the bottlers, as it was they who were most adversely affected by the imitators.

The bottlers, in turn, approached the Root Glass Company of Terrehaute, whose plant superintendent, Alex Samuelson, came up with the solution. He was inspired by the principal ingredients of Coke, the Cocoa leaf and the Kola nut. An illustration found in the Encyclopedia Britannica of the Cocoa bean pod, provided the inspiration for the shape of the bottle. Earl Dean, the mould shop supervisor, then had the task of moulding the bottle. The first bottle, produced in 1914, was rounded and fat. According to Lieverse this new bottle, distinctly different, immediately grabbed attention and it earned itself many nick names, including the "hobbleskirt bottle" named after a dress in fashion at the time, which was narrow below the knee causing the women to hobble. Then it was duped as the "Mae West" bottle, which derived from the fact that the bottle had a bosomy look. Some just preferred to call it the "Sexy" bottle. (Lieverse, 1990, pg. 89).

The new bottle design did, however, meet with disapproval from French designer Raymond Loewy. He felt that Samuelson's design was far too explicitly feminine and out of tone as regards its simple commercial function. (Lieverse, 1990, pg. 93). So Loewy, who had previously designed dispensers and a streamlined delivery car for the company, insisted that this 1914 model should be thinned out. The nicknames in circulation at the time too, no doubt, horrified him, encouraging him to continue to argue his point. Eventually his



Fig.7a & b:

(a) Prototype (1914) (b) standardised (1916) version of the bottle.

perseverance was rewarded and the company agreed to commission him to streamline the bottle. Loewy's design appeared in 1916.

The illustrations, opposite, shows the two bottles (Fig. 7). Indeed, bottle (a) - the 1914 bottle - does have a very curvy appearance. Bottle (b) - the 1916 bottle - is Loewy's 'streamlined' version and this shape remained, becoming famous. This new bottle was the pride and joy of the company. In time it would symbolise Coca-Cola as much as the script logo.

The next step was to patent the new bottle putting an end to imitators who, even in 1914, were hot on the bottlers' heels with their own version of the then bottle. Candler's moves ensured that the bottle was finally patented and protected by copyright in 1916. (Bayley, 1986, pg. 46)

The design of the Coca-Cola bottle.

Taking a closer look now at the bottle design, it can be said, without a doubt, that the bottle is instantly recognisable, especially when compared to bottles of rival soft drinks, such as Pepsi Cola. A Pepsi bottle has no 'grooves' like the Coke bottle and is tall and narrow, with very few curves.

The actual Coke bottle is heavy enough to make the customer believe that it holds more than only six and a half ounces. The twenty grooves give it a distinctive and solid feel. No other bottle feels this way in the hand. Besides these aesthetic qualities, the bottle's design has properties which most people wouldn't know of or appreciate. Due to the solid nature of its design the bottle can withstand extreme pressure. This simply means that it very rarely explodes, something familiar to bottlers dealing with fizzy drinks.



Fig.8a & b: Present day bottle and

older 1916 type.



Some changes have taken place to the bottle over the years, however, and the one we see today is in fact a lot different to its 1916 ancestor (Fig. 8a & b). Originally, the words "Coca-Cola" were embossed on the glass (Fig. 8b). This was later replaced in the 'fifties with just white paint. When it first appeared on the shelves, the paint was sharp and clean but, with time, the paint faded, resulting in the type looking as if it was sandblasted onto the bottle. The paint, in turn, was replaced with a paper label during the 'sixties (Fig. 8a). The bottle has also been considerably reduced in size. The original 1916 bottle (Fig. 8b) held a thirst-quenching 12 fluid ounces of Coca-Cola. Today, however, it holds a mere six and a half fluid ounces. Another change is the shape of the bottle. During the 'sixties, its rounded sides were streamlined again, giving the bottle a slimmer look (Fig. 8a). Along with this, the neck was slightly stretched, making the bottle appear taller. The twenty grooves have been flattened again over the last twenty years. The changes, then, have been plentiful, although the bottle is still instantly recognisable.



Fig.9: Fred Mizen illustration, dated 1929.



THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

The pause that refreshes

WHAT a joy it is to know there's one great drink that never fails to come across with the shade answer. A drink that serves an ace to thirst and brings a cool, tingling after-sense of refreshment, a feeling of readiness for a fresh start. Right across the country, between and after all games, it's ice-cold Coca-Cola every time. And for busy workers, too, how good it is to know the pause that refreshes. The wholesome refreshment of Coca-Cola makes a little minute long enough for a big rest.

THE BEST SERVED DRINK IN THE WORLD
Served in its own thin, crystalline glass. This glass insures the right proportions of Coca-Cola syrup and ice-cold carbonated water. The final touches are to add a little finely chopped ice and stir with a spoon until the sparkling bubbles head at the brim.

BY HENRY D. ADAMS MIZEN ILLUSTRATION THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

Fig.10: Fred Mizen illustration teamed with slogan, dated 1929.

CHAPTER THREE

Promoting the Coke bottle, advertising strategy and market lapses.

This chapter deals with the arrival of a new company president in 1923: Robert Woodruff. He felt that the Coke bottle should have been receiving more attention in the ads and a new advertising strategy was therefore implemented. I will explain by reference to the company's advertising strategy, how Coca-Cola continued to promote itself as being part of the American Dream.

The opportunities presented by the Second World War for worldwide distribution is also touched on, as are the patriotic advertising engaged in during this period. This chapter deals also with the loss of market to Pepsi-Cola which emerged as a major rival in the 'fifties and Coca-Cola's other marketing lapses.

Promoting the Coca-Cola bottle.

Although the Coca-Cola bottle was introduced onto the market in 1916, the specially engraved Coke glass remained in the advertising spotlight until the late 'twenties. Up until then, the advertisements portrayed Coke being drunk from this special glass. The examples opposite illustrate this point. Figure 9, dated 1929, is a painting by a popular artist of the day called Fred Mizen. His illustrations had a relaxed, care-free atmosphere and when teamed with the immortal copyline from 1929, "The pause that refreshes", they became very popular (Fig. 10). As can be seen, the man in the ad is drinking from the Coke glass the bottle does not make as appearance. It is surprising to see that the company were still promoting this glass almost thirteen years after the creation of their unique bottle. It was, in my opinion, quite shortsighted of them when one considers how much more practical a bottle is than a glass and, also, how unique this bottle was to Coke drinkers, as none of the other rival



Fig.11: Package design for the six-pack.

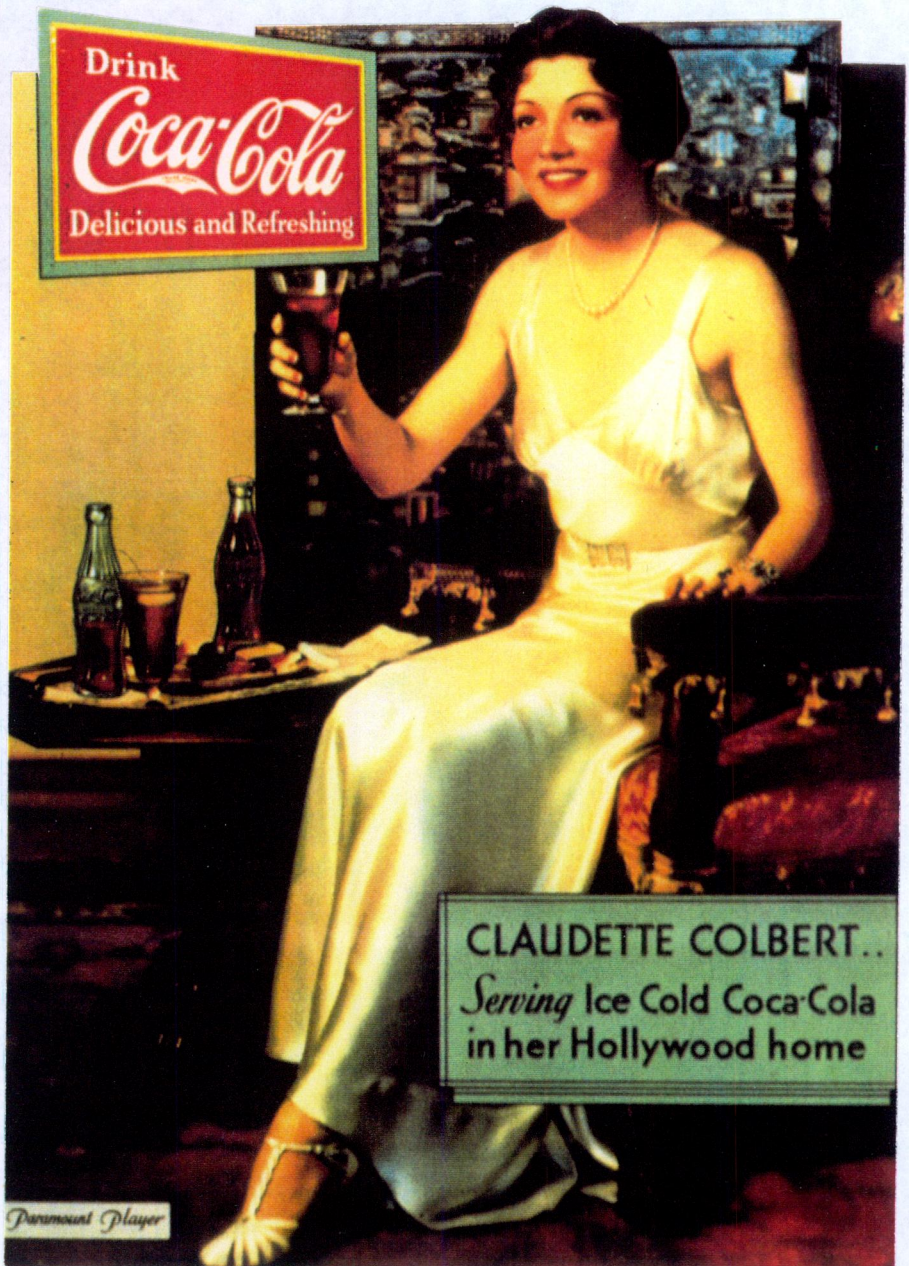


Fig.12: Claudette Colbert poster, dated 1931, artist unknown.

companies had a bottle like it. However, with the arrival of a new company president, Robert Woodruff (1890-1985), in 1923, it was decided that the bottle should become more visible in the advertisements, although it wasn't until the early 'thirties that it started to take over from the glass. Woodruff's first step was to create the six-pack in 1924 ensuring that the uniform packaging policy was adhered to and soon Coca-Cola had let itself in on the home market. (Fig. 11) (Bayley, 1986, pg. 46)

The advertising of the bottle on a larger scale meant a change, so the company began to create an image where people were depicted enjoying daily activities and relaxing afterwards with a bottle of Coke.

The selling point for the bottle was the fact that it could be held in one hand. Drinking it from the neck was not considered uncouth, in fact, quite the opposite. It was the American way. Coca-Cola subtly showed that this way of drinking was acceptable by creating images tinged with aristocratic overtones. The advertisements showed Coke being drunk straight from the bottle or, if the ladies preferred, through a straw. Take, for example, the 1931 illustration of Claudette Colbert, a Hollywood star, serving ice-cold Coca-Cola in her home (Fig. 12). Claudette, a Paramount actress, is obviously quite wealthy, but this wealth is shown in a subtle manner. She holds the engraved Coke glass in her hand, but the bottle is there, suggesting that it too is acceptable. This contrasts with the earlier ads in which the bottle was not shown with the glass.

The increasing pace of American life during the 'twenties and 'thirties meant people had less time for breaks. In the past, the glass had to be carefully held to prevent the liquid from spilling out. Now once drinking directly from the bottle was socially accepted, the most carefree positions could be used, making it ideal for working breaks (Fig. 13, pg. 17). The bottle could be brought into the work place as part of the worker's lunch, thus saving the worker from making a trip to a soda fountain during his break. The bottle could also be easily

Fig.13: Drinking Coke the American way.



Fig.14: The Coke ads on this fencing stand out amidst all the signs for cures. Circa 1920.



disposed of. Gradually, the atmosphere in which Coca-Cola could be drunk was becoming an important part of the company's advertising campaigns.

According to Prendergast, the D'Arcy Agency was responsible for a lot of the advertising during this period. They carefully selected the best Artists of the day to produce wholesome, cheerful paintings promoting Coke. (Prendergast, 1990, pg. 164). Fred Mizen's painting, as shown previously, (Fig 10. pg. 15) is an example of this. All the paintings were genuine works of art, but the artists never put their egos above the product. It was Coke's policy that the drink should remain the centre of attention at all times. The idea in the illustration was the first thing the viewer always noted, not the skill of the Artist.

There is no doubt that the company carefully planned their advertising images. Coca-Cola would stand out in the crowd. The illustration on the opposite page (Fig. 14) illustrates this quite clearly. The fencing is covered with adverts for cold and flu remedies, along with ads for a Chiropractor and even baking powder. The Coke ads stand out clearly from the rest, particularly when placed with ads which remind the viewer of everyday, mundane life. Whether it was the intention of the company to place the ad in this particular spot is not clear; however, it is a suitable place as regards catching the public's attention. During a time when society was rushing along and trying to cope with everyday problems, Coca-Cola was presenting itself as an opportunity to take a quick rest from it all.

Coke and the Second World War.

Bayley writes that when Robert Woodruff took over from Asa Candler in 1923, Coca-Cola was an American phenomenon, but not a particularly familiar product elsewhere. Candler was content to market Coke mainly in America but Woodruff had an international vision. In 1926 he formed the International Division, aware that its success would depend on the strength of the advertising (Bayley, 1986, pg. 46). However it was to be thirteen years later, with the advent of the Second World War, that the perfect opportunity arose. Woodruff

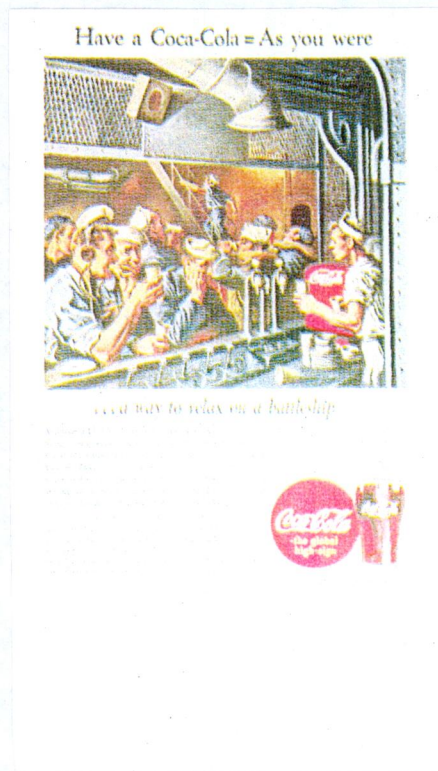


Fig.15 a



Fig.15 b



Fig.15 c

seized the opportunity of the war to export Coke, and the international distribution began in earnest. Three weeks after the United States entered the war, Woodruff insisted that American troops on foreign shores should be supplied with Coca-Cola. The leaders of the armed forces agreed and ordered:

That every man in uniform gets a bottle
of Coca-Cola for 5 cents, wherever he is
and whatever it costs the company.

(Lieverse 1990, pg. 91)

Because of this well inspired idea, five billion bottles of Coke were posted around the world, turning the American drink into the world's most recognised brand-name. Forty nine bottling plants were shipped out, as it proved cheaper than sending the filled bottles. General Dwight Eisenhower even sent a telegram for a desperately needed three million bottles of Coke, emphasising just how important the drink was for the morale of the American troops. The demand was so great that the army command asked if the bottling plants could be exempt from sugar rationing. The final feather in Woodruff's cap was the knowledge that secret army manoeuvres were being relayed to the export division to ensure that Coca-Cola would always be where it was needed (Lieverse, 1990, pg. 93).

Advertising kept close on the heels of all these developments. Patriotic posters appeared in abundance during the early 'forties, illustrating men and women in uniform, all pausing momentarily to have a bottle of Coke (the engraved glass was now rarely seen). Even in the face of war, Coke drinkers in the ads remained cheerful.(Figs. 15 a,b & c). The images never contained any scenes of the war; the figures were always shown in a non-descriptive background. Figure 15a, which shows men on board a ship, is one of the few that shows an actual 'scene'. Even here, there is no suggestion of a war; these men could just as easily be members of the navy in a 'no-war' era. A first glance at the illustrations does not remind one that there is a war; one sees people drinking Coke and smiling. The images were a simple reminder that Coke would refresh, and that life was still good as long as you had a bottle of Coke in your hand and a smile on your face. Never mind the pain of war, Coke would make it 'all better'.



Fig.16: Haddon Sundblom's Father Christmas, 1950.

Continuing the imagery of the American Dream.

During the late 'forties, Haddon Sundblom, a Swedish artist chosen by the Agency, created an illustration (Fig. 16) which suited the company's ideals of harmony and prosperity down to the ground - Father Christmas. A jolly, loving, all-American Father Christmas was now associated with Coca-Cola. He was the ideal Coke consumer - kind, cheerful and popular. This ad was a particular success because the Santa Claus figure confirmed the way the public wanted to view themselves. Bayley writes that the vision of Santa Claus as the ideal Coke consumer was a very potent image. This figure was someone who both projected and reinforced the public's view of itself.

Santa had the benefit of being idealised
and unreal, but by definition, available
to everybody who cared to believe in him.

(Bayley, 1986, pg. 56)

Santa was now doing what most Americans did - he was drinking Coca-Cola. The cumulative effect of all this advertising was to make Coca-Cola a part of American life, inseparable from all the other parts so beloved by Americans.

Facing the competition.

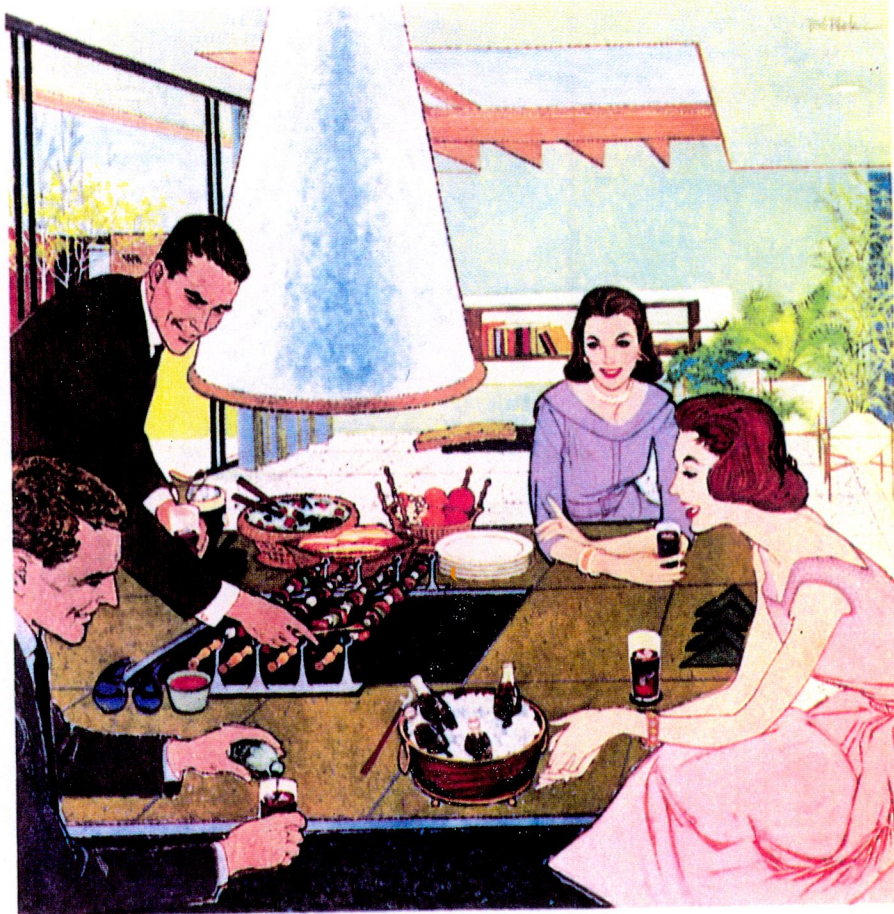
Coca-Cola's market shares had started to drop in the 1950's due to the sudden increased popularity of the rival Pepsi Cola. This soft drink had been formulated in 1894 and suffered severely at the hands of inept businessmen. However, in the 'thirties, new management had begun to transform Pepsi and somehow, to Coke's disgust, the Pepsi company were grabbing market shares in the 'fifties with novel advertising campaigns. The first ever 30 second radio jingle was a Pepsi advertisement. Skywriters emblazoned the skies with the words 'Pepsi-Cola' and the Company even inquired into sponsoring Popeye cartoons, suggesting that Popeye should get his strength from Pepsi instead of spinach. To make matters worse, a senior Coke executive had crossed over to Pepsi in 1949 and began promoting Pepsi by radio. Another major slip-up on Coke's behalf was their inability to see the potential behind a family-sized Coke bottle. Pepsi, however, did. It was introduced onto the market in 1954 and it took the Coca-Cola company three years to organize themselves

into introducing one of their own. Up until the 1950's Coke's market share against Pepsi had been 5 to 1; now it was 2 to 1. (Graham, 1993, pg. 31)

Coca Cola may have been more successful on sales terms, compared to Pepsi, but this rival company was way ahead when it came to grabbing the public's attention. A radio jingle lasting thirty seconds was not a revolutionary idea, so why didn't Coke think of it first? Or if the executive that 'crossed over' in 1949 had suggested it to the Coke company before his departure, why hadn't they tried it out? They seemed so engrossed in perfecting their advertising that they never thought of causing excitement by staging events like Pepsi's skywriter stunt or perhaps sponsoring some event or programme. Pepsi's clever idea of attempting to sponsor the Popeye cartoons was a clear indication of who they aimed their advertising towards: the younger generation, a section of the market that Coke seemed to be ignoring. Pepsi may not have succeeded with their sponsorship, but the idea was there, and the company's creative ideas were certainly more daring than Coca-Cola's. This lack of advertising aimed at the younger generation was to become a major problem for Coke and it will be dealt with later in this chapter.

Pepsi's increasing success sent a panic through the Coca-Cola company and the management realised, after the damage had been done, that more dynamism in their advertising would be of benefit. Bayley writes that in 1956, Coca-Cola dropped W.C. D'Arcy and joined forces with the McCann-Erickson Advertising agency. Coca-Cola felt that D'Arcy was not aggressive enough to cope with the increasingly competitive market, and they turned to McCann-Erickson, whom they felt were definitely more in touch (Bayley, 1986, pg. 50).

Years of motivational research had left Coca-Cola constantly asking why people bought certain things. McCann-Erickson answered the question for them in the early 'fifties. Consumers bought goods because they wanted to identify with them and what they represented. Coke was trying hard and succeeding fairly well in representing the American Dream. All Americans wanted to be a part of this dream, so buying Coke would realise that



CREATIVE ENTERTAINING is part of today's good life... and you can count on Coca-Cola to make its own contribution to the good taste of your arrangements. When you serve a Coke, you serve the best-loved, sparkling drink in all the world.



SIGN OF GOOD TASTE

This Week
St. Louis Post-Dispatch
Atlanta Journal-Constitution
Columbus Courier Journal
Columbus Dispatch
Tulsa World
Austin Beacon Journal
American Weekly

March 24, 1957
March 24, 1957
March 24, 1957
March 24, 1957
March 24, 1957
March 24, 1957
March 24, 1957
April 7, 1957

PO 90511 Ad 90

Fig.17: Bob Peak illustration dated 1957.

desire. With the help of this new creative team, Coke soon started giving the consumer an increased belief that they were buying into this American dream.

A new dynamism.

The Eisenhower years after the end of the Second World War saw America prospering and the standards of living improving (Prendergast, 1993, pg. 126). Coca-Cola, along with McCann-Erickson, always aware of societies changing moods, portrayed them in their advertisements. Bob Peak, a favourite artist of the time (1957) created some illustrations that defined the 'contemporary' style of those years. His paintings were full of domestic life situations. Needless to say, they all had that desired American 'way of life' look to them - handsome, well-dressed relaxed men, surrounded by pretty, smiling and obedient looking women (Fig. 17). Look at their surroundings: the furniture is modern, everything is fresh and clean. In an age when no-one was going to look back to the past, everything said "look forward, the future is going to be prosperous". Although this illustration was commissioned by McCann-Erickson, the ad was created three years before the 'drive-in' and 'bowling alley' ads, shown on page 30. McCann-Erickson's imagery was becoming a lot more dynamic and they had started to use the Coke 'colours', red and white, in abundance.

Figure 18, on the following page, shows a couple enjoying Coke at a drive-in. The predominant colours in this ad are red and white, the Coke 'colours'. Red also appears in abundance in Figure 19, dated 1960: the family are all wearing red shirts. This use of colour was a subtle but clever device. The consumer had become accustomed to seeing the Coke red and white, so when these colours appeared in the ads, the viewer would subconsciously link them to Coke even before seeing the logo. The minimal use of colour in these ads gave the images a lot more dynamism and punch, compared to some ads from earlier years, also shown, where the colours are a lot more subdued (Figs. 20 & 21, dated 1929 and 1936).

A vintage color photograph of four young people, likely a school or youth group, posing in a room with wood-paneled walls. They are all wearing matching red short-sleeved shirts with a black circular emblem on the left chest and black skirts or trousers. The boy in the center is standing with his hands behind his head, looking upwards. To his right, a girl stands holding a pink drink. To his left, a girl sits on a piece of exercise equipment, possibly a rowing machine. In the foreground, a girl stands with her hands clasped, smiling. The floor is polished wood, and the background features a wooden bench and a door.



THRU 50 YEARS
The pause
I advance at climate change. But how
could Coca-Cola make a pause itself?
Only by coming to country, around the
Coca-Cola is what refreshment was

ICE COLD EVERY DAY
IN THE YEAR
5¢

A vintage Coca-Cola advertisement featuring a man and a woman in 1920s attire. The man is behind a bar, pouring a drink, while the woman sits on a stool, holding a glass. A red Coca-Cola sign is in the background. The text "At a cool and cheerful place" is visible in the bottom left corner.

The 1960 'bowling alley' (Fig. 19) ad is a good example of an advertisement helping to create an image of Coke being part of the American dream. This image of the 'Happy Family' was seen as an important element in the make up of the American Dream. The family consists of one daughter, one son and of course, respectable, attractive parents. The words "Bright and Lively" appear in the copyline and this sums up the behaviour of the family, as well as the taste of the drink. This type of ad was reinforcing a positive view of American life, which was connected with the image of Coke.

Another situation advantageous for Coke to be seen in was in the company of highly respected figures. Figures 22 on the following page show Kennedy, Eisenhower and Castro, all quenching their thirst with Coke. The Beatles were also photographed posing with Coke.

Indeed, Coca-Cola advertising was forming the imagery by which we recognise America and to a certain extent, on which America seemed to be modelling itself. Everything revolves around our thirst, not for liquid, but for a care-free life. No-one likes hassle or rush and when something presents itself as a momentary method of escape, the opportunity is taken. Coca-Cola saw this at an early stage and used it to their best advantage. Thus, their success comes mainly from their publicity, which lets the consumer know that it understands the way they feel.

Conservatism holds Coke back.

All this time Coca-Cola was creating an image for 'middle' America. The illustrations, like the example mentioned above (Figs. 15 to 21), were dealing with a section of society that some consumers did not, or simply were not, a part of. As mentioned previously, the group Coke were forgetting about were the youth, and the soft drink that grabbed their attention was Pepsi-Cola. The rival company had found its own place in an increasing market; young people who wanted an alternative to the market leader. This sudden increase meant that Coke were slipping back yet again. Why the company had never aimed the advertisements

Fig.22: The Beatles, Kennedy, Castro and Eisenhower were all advocates of Coca-Cola.

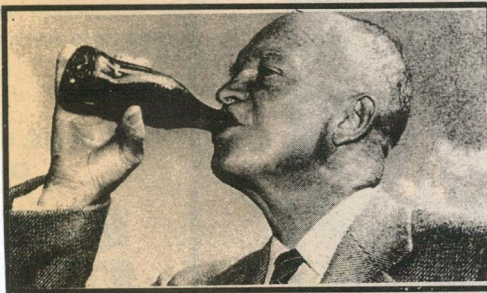


Fig.23: The first Coke Can design dated 1960.



at younger people is, to me, a mystery. All of the ads I have previously discussed contain very few images of teenagers or even children. In my opinion, it was again very shortsighted of the company. They were obviously so conservative and confident of their success that they did not realise that they were ignoring a potentially large market segment. Pepsi saw the opportunities presented by the youth market and advertised accordingly, thus gaining a large market share and creating an increase in sales.

Another particularly slow reaction by the Coke company to competition was in 1961, when Pepsi and other rival soft drink companies started selling diet sodas under their own brand names. It took Coke a staggering twenty-two years to introduce its own diet brand under the name Coke. TaB, a clear coloured diet soda was created in 1963, but it was a diversified product of the Coca-Cola company. To lend the name Coke to any other product at that time was blasphemy, although it was stated on the label that the drink was part of the Coca-Cola company. Sales were high, but when it was suggested by an executive that another diet drink with the word Coke in its name be created the company refused, believing that a second diet drink would jeopardise TaB's high market share (Prendergast, 1993, pg. 341). Canned soda drinks had become available in the early 'sixties. Figure 23 shows the can design, which following company policy was uniform. By 1984, when Coke finally decided to create diet Coke, the market was well and truly saturated with diet drinks. Chapter four deals with the introduction of diet Coke in 1985, where the 'one product company' factor is discussed as a reason for Coke's long delay.

Due to conservatism, opportunities were missed resulting in Coke becoming a victim of its earlier successes. If they had considered targeting ads at a younger generation, instead of spending copious amounts of time and money on targeting other older members of society, they would not have lost so much market share to Pepsi. Why they never thought of creating a family-sized bottle either is extraordinary. After all, the company was engrossed in the 'American family' image, and the idea of creating a family bottle should have been second nature to them.

As a victim, however, the company did learn how to survive and fight back. When the damage had already been done, Woodruff realised that they were going to have to look at things from a different perspective if they wanted to stay on top. He recognised that the company should have seen the opportunities that Pepsi were grabbing, but it seemed it seemed to suffer from 'tunnel vision'. 1970, however, was going to bring some real changes. At long last the company were going to try some more daring moves. If it was working for Pepsi, it would work for them.



Fig.24: 'Hillside' commercial, 1969.

CHAPTER FOUR

Project Arden: The decision to initiate a change

'Project Arden' was a decision by the company in 1970 to initiate some changes. Amongst these changes was an alteration to the Coca-Cola trademark. This chapter deals with the alterations, along with a look at the Coke logo from 1886 to the 'Project Arden' revised logo. Also discussed is 'segmented' market advertising with a look at some recent magazine ads targeted at different sections of the market.

Project Arden.

After the worldwide advertising of Coke, brought about by opportunities made possible by the Second World War, the trademark was visible in every country. By 1969, it was soon so well known that it almost became 'invisible'; the public were so accustomed to seeing it, that they literally weren't seeing it any more. Along with this the company were aware that Pepsi-Cola were still increasing their market shares (Prendergast, 1993, pg. 138). If the company wanted Coca-Cola to continue selling well, they had to keep interest in the product alive. They knew a change would have to take place. This change would involve a new mood on the advertising front, and a new look to the logo.

During 1969 an advertisement appeared on television which gave Coca-Cola the image of being a sort of multinational corporate version of the flower-child and earth-mother ethic. The advert opened with a multi-racial group of people, both young and old, running up a hillside, while holding hands. On reaching the top of this hill, they burst into song, encouraging the world to harmonise and, of course, share a Coke (Fig. 24). The 'Hillside' commercial tune, even became a hit single in numerous countries and a very rosy picture of the Coca-Cola company was painted. This new image was quite a shocking one, compared with earlier ads which had a more conservative air to them. This 'flower-child' image was the



Fig.25: The circle logo from 1940.

beginning of the 1970 rejuvenation plan: 'Project Arden'. Along with this, it was decided that the famous circle behind the Coca-Cola logo (Fig. 25), was to be replaced with a square. An alteration to the logo would be a risky move, but the company felt that it had to be done in order to recreate an awareness of Coke (Prendergast, 1993, pg. 141).

Lippincott and Margulies, a New York advertising agency, were the company involved in the circle, to square, change. McCann-Erickson were still involved with Coke, but it must be noted that Coke did not employ any agencies as 'in-house' designers. The company would brief Independent design consultants and a suitable agency would then be chosen. The slogan at the time (1970), "Things Go Better with Coke" was now over seven years old and so it was replaced with "It's the Real Thing". During this time society was leaving behind the luxurious indulgences of the 'sixties and the company, aware of these changes, were now encouraging people to have more 'integrity'. Thus, the 'Real Thing' slogan was more appropriate, as regards the mood of society and, perhaps also, a suggestion to Pepsi drinkers that Coca-Cola was the real Cola drink. It was also decided at this time that all Coke signage was to have a limit of two colours (Bayley, 1986, pg. 75).

Recognition is a vital part in any product's success. Changing the logo is running the risk of a company's clients believing that the product quality has also changed (Schudson, 1984, pg. 46) and now, after almost 90 years there was going to be an alteration to the Coca-Cola logo.

The Coca-Cola trademark.

Looking back to 1886, and the very first ad that ran for Coca-Cola in the Atlanta Journal, May 29th 1886: the copyline read:

"Coca-Cola, Delicious, Refreshing, Exhilarating, Invigorating!"

(Prendergast 1993, pg. 33)



Fig.26: Coca-Cola logo. Ad dated 1915.

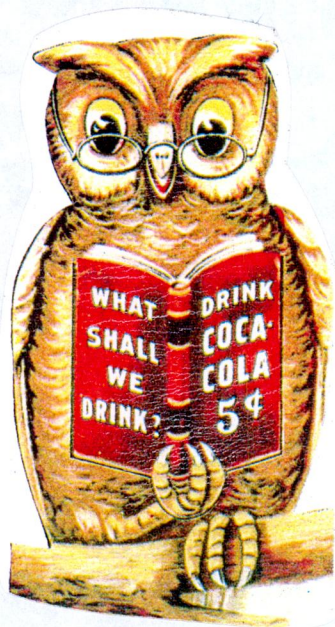


Fig.27: Owl bookmark, dated 1911.

This first effort contained the famous copyline, but the words "Coca-Cola" weren't in the usual script. Instead they were in block letters. Robinson had decided to work on the logo at the time, aware that a uniform logo would encourage business due to its familiarity. Prendergast writes that he spent the winter months of 1886 working on this logo and it wasn't until June 1887 that it appeared first in all the glory of its Spencerian handwriting (Prendergast, 1993, pg. 32). Taking a look at the example on the opposite page, (Fig. 26), one can see the curves of the letter "C" in both words and how they join the words together making it one unit. The dash has been reduced to a small square. The shapes that these swirls create are what make the logo so recognisable. I would even dare to suggest that if the letters "O" and "A" were replaced by, say, "U" and "E", at first glance one would still read it as Coca-Cola. Robinson's script logo has stood the test of time. Over the first few years of its existence it gained some weight and lost it again in various different ads. When it wasn't used and some other type took its place, the immediate recognition was lost. Look for example, at the "Owl" bookmark (Fig. 27). Although the book itself is illustrated in the Coca-Cola colours, because the recognisable script is absent, one could very easily dismiss it as not being a piece of merchandising for Coca-Cola.

Despite the fact that Coca-Cola has extensive advertising and phenomenal success, I discovered during my research that there is very little design literature on the subject of the trademark. In my opinion, this is because of the circumstances under which the logo was created. Robinson may have spent many months perfecting it, but the fact that he was a bookkeeper and not a professional designer is a major factor in this lack of literature. It is true to say that the logo doesn't look particularly professional, but I believe that this is what makes it so appealing. Its rounded, gentle easy-going style has a friendly look to it. It imitates a signature, something personal created by the hand, not something sculpted and purposely formed. The logo may be the work of a mere bookkeeper, but its recognition is worldwide and it has remained the same since 1887, which also creates a sense of nostalgia. Surely this is proof enough of its success ?

Fig.28: Contour and new logo. 1970.



Fig.29: Block logo. 1970.



Project Arden was the first decision since 1886 to alter the trademark; the circle behind the logo was to be replaced with a square and all signs were to contain only red and white. So, what was left from those pre-war years of calender girls, copylines, jingles and slogans? - the logo, the colour red and the famous Coke bottle.

Trademark changes under Project Arden.

To this threesome was then added a new element. A simple device was adopted that would augment the existing trademark: the dynamic white contour, a white line underlining the words Coca-Cola (Fig. 28). The line suggested movement and life, while some noticed that it echoed the outline of the Coke bottle. Figure 28 shows the revised Coca-Cola logo, illustrating that the change is not a dramatic one. Even more recently, a second line has been added, which narrows slightly and varies in colour from country to country. For example, here in Ireland, the line is silver, while in the Netherlands it is brown. The company also decided to create a logo with the word 'Coke' as shown in figure 29. This block script appears on the other side of the bottle label and on all cans to this day. The colours remain the same and the white contour line device is used also. Although this shorter version does not flow like the original, it has a strong dynamic look to it and has become as well known as the original 'Coca-Cola' trademark.

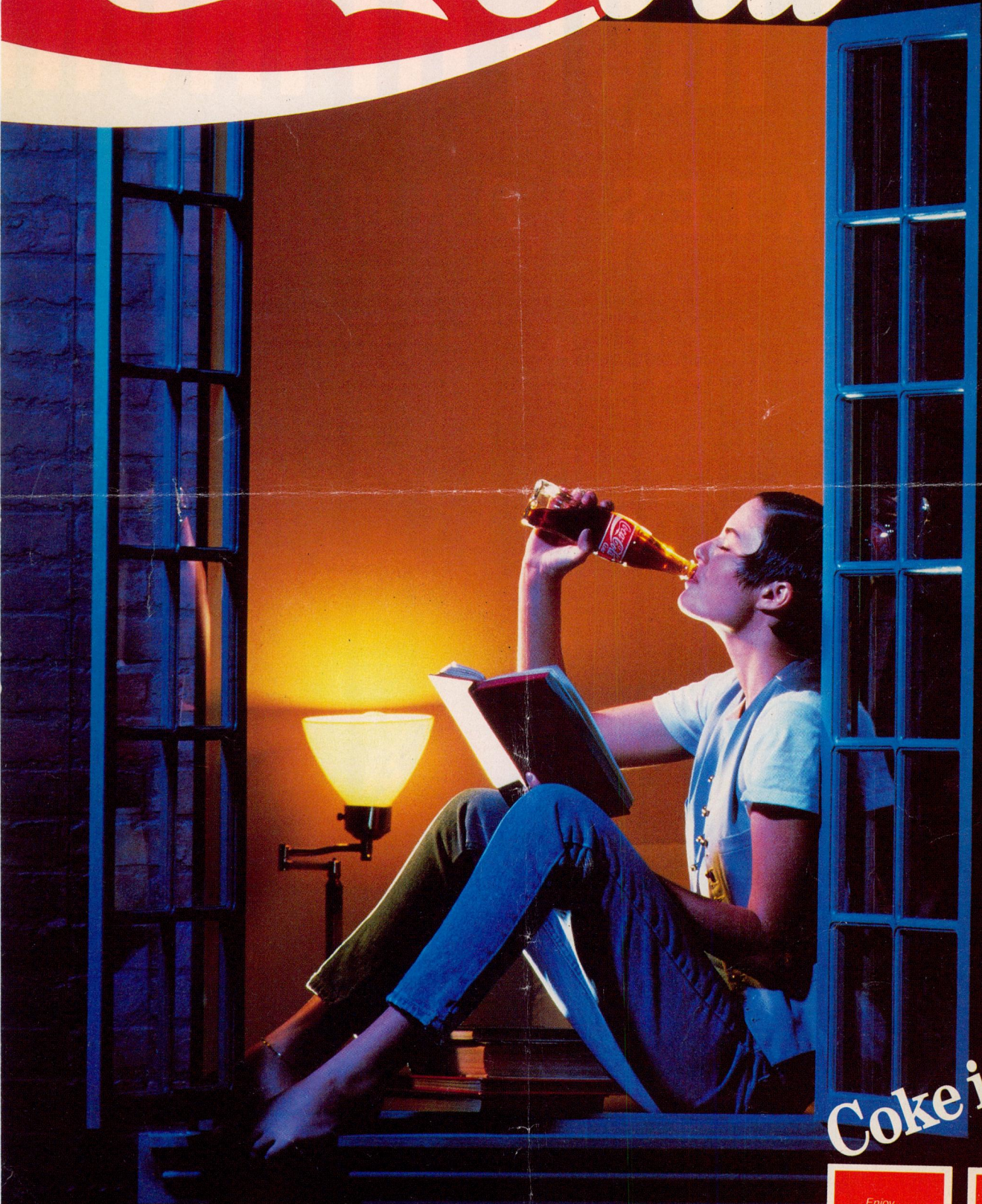
Project Arden was an attempt at guessing what the ever-changing market might do next. The company hoped that they could anticipate these changes because as a market becomes bigger, people become more sophisticated in their needs (Sonsino, 1990, pg. 65).

Segmented advertising.

During the 'seventies a new method of advertising was born. People living in different parts of America and the world had different ideas and values. The response to these varying viewpoints was segmented marketing. Companies like Coke realised that they were

Fig.30: Magazine ad, 1988.

Coca-Cola



Coke is it!



'Coca-Cola' and 'Coke' are registered trade marks which identify the same product of The Coca-Cola Company.

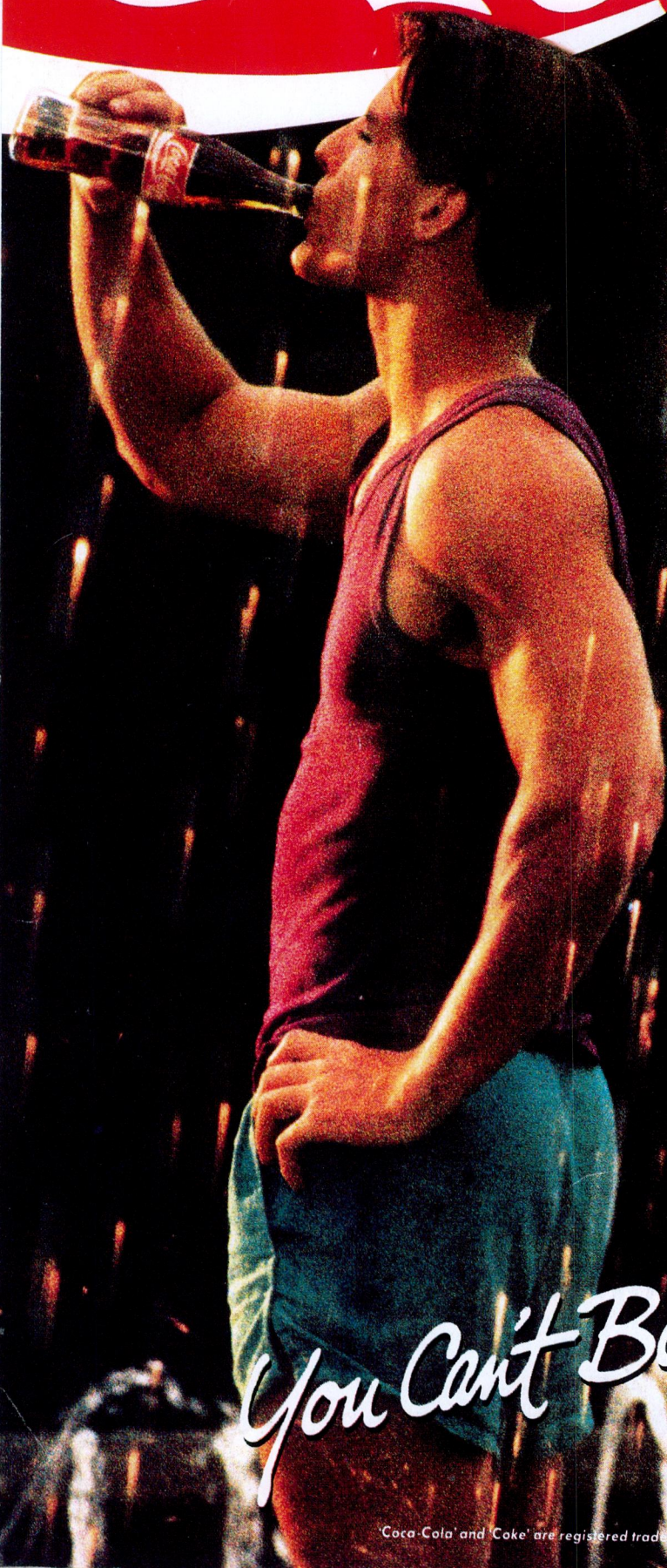
going to have to try to cater for everyone's needs. Segmented advertising is still used today. For example, on some radio stations the jingles accompanying the Coke ads have a rock sound to them. Research has shown that a certain group with certain tastes listen to this station, so the Coke advertisements are carefully created to appeal to this target audience. The same applies to television commercials and these will be discussed later. The point is that Coke carefully create several images targeted at specific sections of society

An example of segmented advertising is the advertisement on the opposite page which is taken from a music magazine, dated 1988 (Fig. 30). This particular ad, in my opinion, is aimed at students. The girl is seated at an open window with a small pile of books, which indicates her position in life, that of a student. The ad is saying that while you study at night, you can take a break with Coca-Cola. Marchand states that an important element in the construction of the American Dream was the image of the perfect family (Marchand, 1985, pg. 76). In this context, the 'perfect' student would stay in at night and study just like the girl in the ad. However, this untrendy idea would not go down too well with most students today. But the care-free atmosphere cleverly created in the ad takes away the drudgery usually associated with study. If she were slumped over a desk, it wouldn't look as appealing. Her sitting position at an open window is relaxed. Her dress is casual and trendy: jeans, t-shirt and no shoes. Even the lamp in the background, which looks like an anglepoise lamp, has been turned upwards adding to the care-free atmosphere. These, however, are not the things the viewer sees first. One simply sees this girl relaxing with a bottle of Coke. The whole image suggests that studying with a bottle of Coke is the 'in' thing to do, after all, "Coke is it!"

Another ad, shown on the following page (Fig. 31), is dated 1989. The slogan on this occasion reads: "You can't beat the feeling!" The image is of a young, healthy man enjoying a bottle of Coke. Judging by his dress, we are led to believe that he has been involved in some form of sport. He has the 'perfect' male body: fit, healthy and attractive. It is important to see that the man does not look physically exhausted, otherwise it would be a strain to the

Fig.31: Magazine ad, 1989.

Coca-Cola



You Can't Beat The Feeling!



'Coca-Cola' and 'Coke' are registered trademarks which identify the same product of The Coca-Cola Company.

image, which in turn, would be associated with drinking Coke. In my opinion, the ad is aimed at young executives who like to keep fit while projecting Coke as a refreshing drink after exercising. The falling water ads to this feeling of refreshment. An interesting point to note is that the subject is not drinking diet Coke, indicating that if one was fit and healthy ordinary Coke is the drink to take.

Both of these ads are fairly typical of Coke's segmented advertising strategy. Interestingly, both ads are aimed at the younger generation, reflecting the company's awareness of this market segment, in contrast to its advertising of the 1950's and 1960's, when it largely ignored young people.

CHAPTER FIVE

A marketing success and a marketing failure.

Up until 1984, Coca-Cola was essentially a one-product company. The 1960's saw society becoming more health conscious and numerous diet drinks had been introduced by many soft-drink companies. Discussed in this chapter is the decision by Coca-Cola to leave behind Asa Candler's wishes that the company remain a single product company. This decision was the beginning of the 'successful Megabrand' range. The disaster of 'New' Coke, however, taught the company a valuable lesson.

To conclude this chapter, I will discuss briefly the design elements of the Megabrand range.

Coca-Cola becomes a multi-product company.

It was twenty-two years after its major rival Pepsi introduced a diet drink under its own brand name before Coca-Cola finally realised that they would have to do the same. The competition had gained too many valuable market points and research was proving to the company that consumer needs were changing again. A radical decision was made: the company were going to have to stop relying on their six and one half ounce bottle to survive. This meant turning their backs on Asa Candler's principle of old. He had clearly stated in 1916 that the company was going to sell only one drink, and that it was to be in a uniform bottle. It had been one of the 'Golden Rules' but now times had called for a change, and it would be the only way to fight off the competition.

Robert Woodruff stepped down as president in 1981 and Roberto Goizeuta took his place. This man had daring ambitions about the future of the company and was responsible for the decisions on marketing new products under the Coke brand name (Prendergast, 1993, pg. 349).

Taking a closer look at the reasons for these changes means asking what was happening in the market that prompted the company to make these decisions? Firstly, the generation born during the years after the war were now reaching middle-age and had stopped drinking Coca-Cola. These people had previously been responsible for a very large amount of Coke sales and now the company had to try and find something else that they would now (Prendergast 1993, pg. 178). Secondly, Pepsi-Cola were creating a lot of attention by starting the 'Pepsi Challenge' during the 'eighties, a test to determine which cola tasted the best. The hushed results were in Coke's favour but flavourists were saying that people were turning to the sweeter, peppered flavour of Pepsi. Coca-Cola was also aware that Pepsi still had a strong hold on the market and that their diet soda was selling well. Another important factor was how the Coca-Cola company was seen by other businesses. Although Coke owned most of the soft-drinks market, other companies felt that Coke were too conservative and not willing to change their principles and 'move with the times'. Even though their advertising and financial management was admired, the company was still seen as a 'one product' company, not willing to branch out and take risks (Bayley 1986, pg. 80).

The company finally decided that there would have to be some new Coke products brought onto the market. The first would be diet Coke. Competing companies had had the foresight to see how successful a diet soda would be and were now reaping the benefits. If the health conscious Coke lovers had started drinking another diet cola, surely as soon as they saw their beloved Coke available as a diet drink, they would snap it up and forget about the competing brand?

The introduction of diet Coke in 1985 soon gained the company their much sought increase market share. Prendergast writes that the gamble of introducing this drink surpassed all expectations. The drink was marketed as an essential part of the 'eighties lifestyle and, as expected, the health conscious Coke lovers were delighted to see a diet drink under their favourite brand name (Prendergast, 1993, pg. 350). The 1963 TaB diet drink had a larger female following than male and the advertising, according to Prendergast, had a



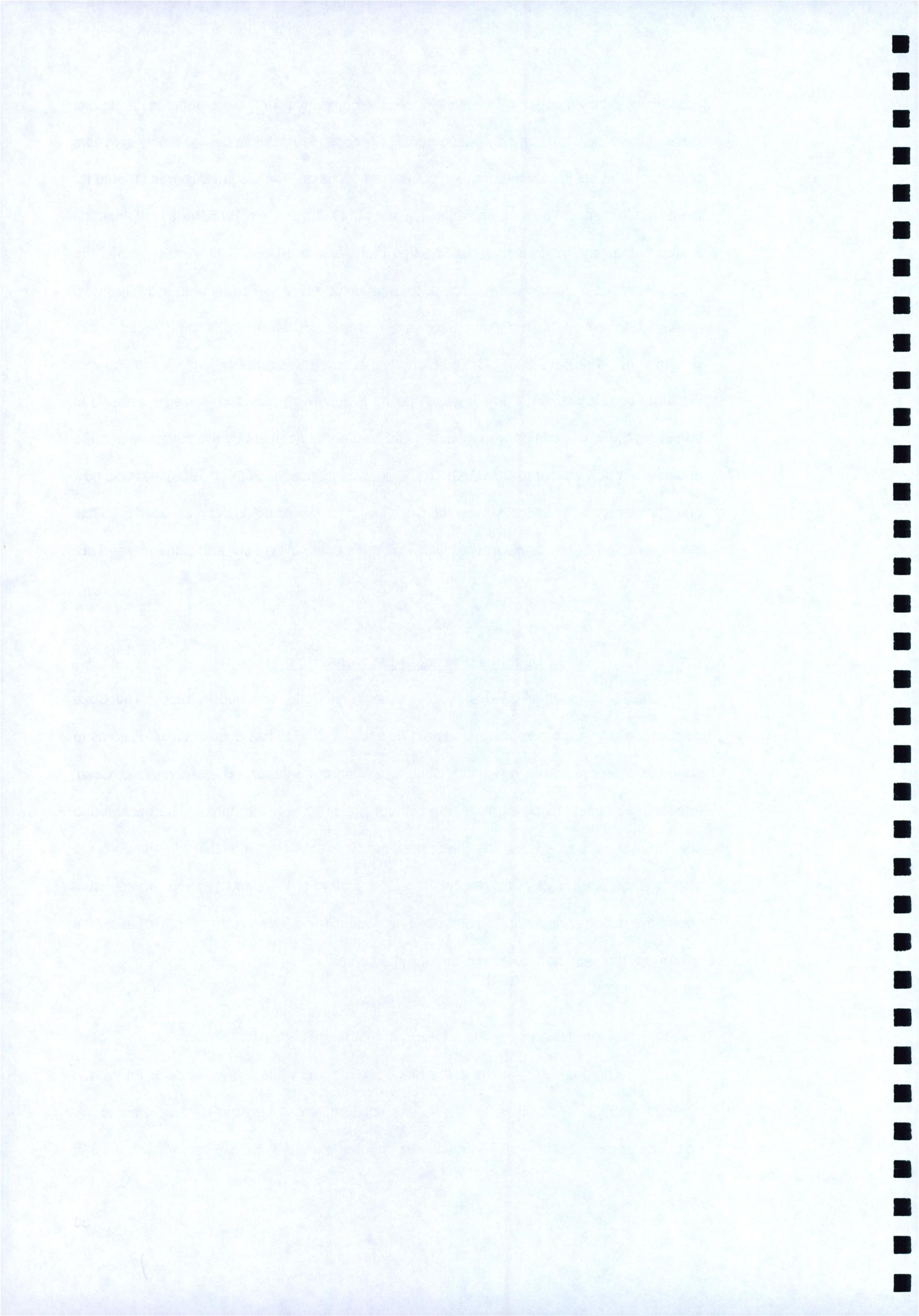
Fig.32: The Megabrand range, 1985.

"perfumy and lacy" image. Considering it took the company twenty three years to create diet Coke, the results were certainly phenomenal. Perhaps the nostalgia behind ninety-six years of the world's best known trademark had ensured success. The slogan that was created for the new drink read: "You're gonna drink it, just for the taste of it" In 1985, they took the drink a step further and introduced a caffeine-free diet Coke and Coca-Cola. Philip Morris, the president of the 7-up company bragged that his drink never had caffeine in it, while Pepsi managed to unveil their caffeine-free version the day before Coke announced theirs (Prendergast, 1993, pg. 350). Coke at long last seemed to be making changes in line with the other companies. This time it wasn't taking twenty-two years and Goizeuta seemed to be setting the whole company in motion. The next announcement by the company was the addition of a new flavour to Coke. 'Cherry' Coke was launched in March 1985, and was now one of nine products available under the Coke brand name, including the diversified products Sprite, diet Sprite (introduced in 1963 with TaB, but a poor seller) TaB, and caffeine-free TaB.

Design elements of the Megabrand range.

Figure 32, shows the can design for the new diet Coke launched in 1985. The Coke colours are still very predominant and note how the word 'diet' has a lower case 'd', so as to state that the drink is still very much Coke, but without the sugar. The shorter logo 'Coke' appears in its usual block form with the contour present below the name. The background is white, while the type is in red - the opposite to ordinary Coke. The thin silver lines in the background create a lot of movement while also hinting at the slim lines your figure would soon have, as a result of drinking diet Coke no doubt! The whole design seems to reflect the dynamism that was now sweeping through the company.

Looking at the design of all the products in this range shows that, except for the 'Sprite' designs, the predominant colours in the range are red and white. The typefaces for the ten different products are quite similar; bold and solid, making a sublime statement about the company perhaps? The TaB can design has no hint of the 1970 Coke contour line present



which, initially appears to be on the Coke cans only, but on closer examination the yellow type on the Sprite can seems to echo the Coke contour. The red colour in the TaB logo is similar to the Coke red, which suggests, or perhaps reminds, the consumer that it is still a product of the Coca-Cola company. The contour line does not appear on the bottles on any occasion, whereas it is present on all of the cans in the Coke range.

'New' Coke - a marketing blunder.

Another more radical reaction to the competition was the decision in 1985 to create a 'New Coke'. Goizueta believed that changing the taste of Coke would encourage the Pepsi drinkers to switch over, and more importantly, show that the company's conservatism was a thing of the past. Intense market research was carried out. Questions were asked, opinions were given, and taste tests were conducted in large doses. The company was putting a lot of effort into the 'New' Coke. The results confirmed that the consumers would accept a 'New' Coke. What the company neglected to tell them, however, was that the new Coke would replace the old. Within the first week of its introduction on the market the sales were impressive, but this turned out to be mere curiosity, however. When the consumers realised that this new Coke was replacing the old, the outrage was something that the company had never anticipated. Within days the company's phonelines were jammed with callers demanding the return of old Coke. Letters arrived too, the writers describing how they felt over this change:

I am a very heavy Coke drinker.
I do not drink coffee, tea, milk,
water, nothing but Coke. I drink
Coke all day long. I always have
a glass or can of Coke. Always.
I have to now try to find something
to drink that I can tolerate.
It will not be New Coke. Never.

Changing Coke is like breaking the
American dream. Like not selling
hot-dogs at a ball game.

HIGH-LOYALTY PRODUCTS	MEDIUM-LOYALTY PRODUCTS	LOW-LOYALTY PRODUCTS
<i>cigarettes</i>	<i>cola drinks</i>	<i>paper towels</i>
<i>laxatives</i>	<i>margarine</i>	<i>crackers</i>
<i>cold remedies</i>	<i>shampoo</i>	<i>scouring powder</i>
<i>35mm film</i>	<i>hand lotion</i>	<i>plastic trash bags</i>
<i>toothpaste</i>	<i>furniture polish</i>	<i>facial tissues</i>

Fig.33: Fortune magazine brand - loyalty table.

Would it be right to rewrite the constitution? The Bible? To me, changing the Coke formula is of such a serious nature.

(Prendergast, 1993, pg. 363/364)

The problem with the new Coke was that the company underestimated just how attached the consumer was to the old Coke. The company had spent millions of dollars and years of work creating this image of Coke being part of the American Dream. Remember the war years and the early 'twenties, when the company took the side of the consumer and refreshed them with undemanding ads? At that stage the consumers had formed a bond with Coke, and the love they had for it followed on during the years. Fortune magazine (August 5th, 1985) showed how brand names matter more in some products than in others (Fig. 33).

Anne B. Fisher writes:

"When a product has been around for a long time and is heavily advertised, it can pick up emotional weight: it can become a part of a person's self-image or summon fond memories gone by."

(Fisher, 1985, pg. 68)

So, when company took old Coke off the market, the consumers felt violated as if part of American history had been changed. Extensive research was carried out for the new Coke, but in the rush of introducing it the company underestimated the amount of people that would reject it. It was the hard way for the company to learn, but the reintroduction of old Coke in the Autumn of 1985 proved to the customer that the company was consumer orientated. Sales rose again, and the joy over the return of the beloved formula was overwhelming:

The old Coke recipe reflects the love of every good American today. There is one Holy Bible, one Elvis Presley, others have tried to copy them, but never quite made it.

(Prendergast, 1993, pg. 366)

When the press finally cornered the company on the whole fiasco, questions were asked as to whether it had been planned or not. The company reply was simple: "We are not that dumb and we are not that smart". (Lieverse, 1990, pg. 93)

The return of the old Coke meant it had to be given a new name. It was called 'Classic' and it was the newest addition to the Coca-Cola line of branded products. By the end of this episode Classic Coke was at the top of the market, while New Coke sat at the bottom. In the middle was Pepsi-Cola.

The advertising and design for 'New' Coke.

Turning back to Figure 32 on page 33, one can see the new designs for 'Classic' Coke and 'New' Coke. The New Coke design is quite minimal compared to the other designs. The blocky Coke logo is used and appears in white, in a bolder form than usual. The white contour line is present, and the background of the can is red.

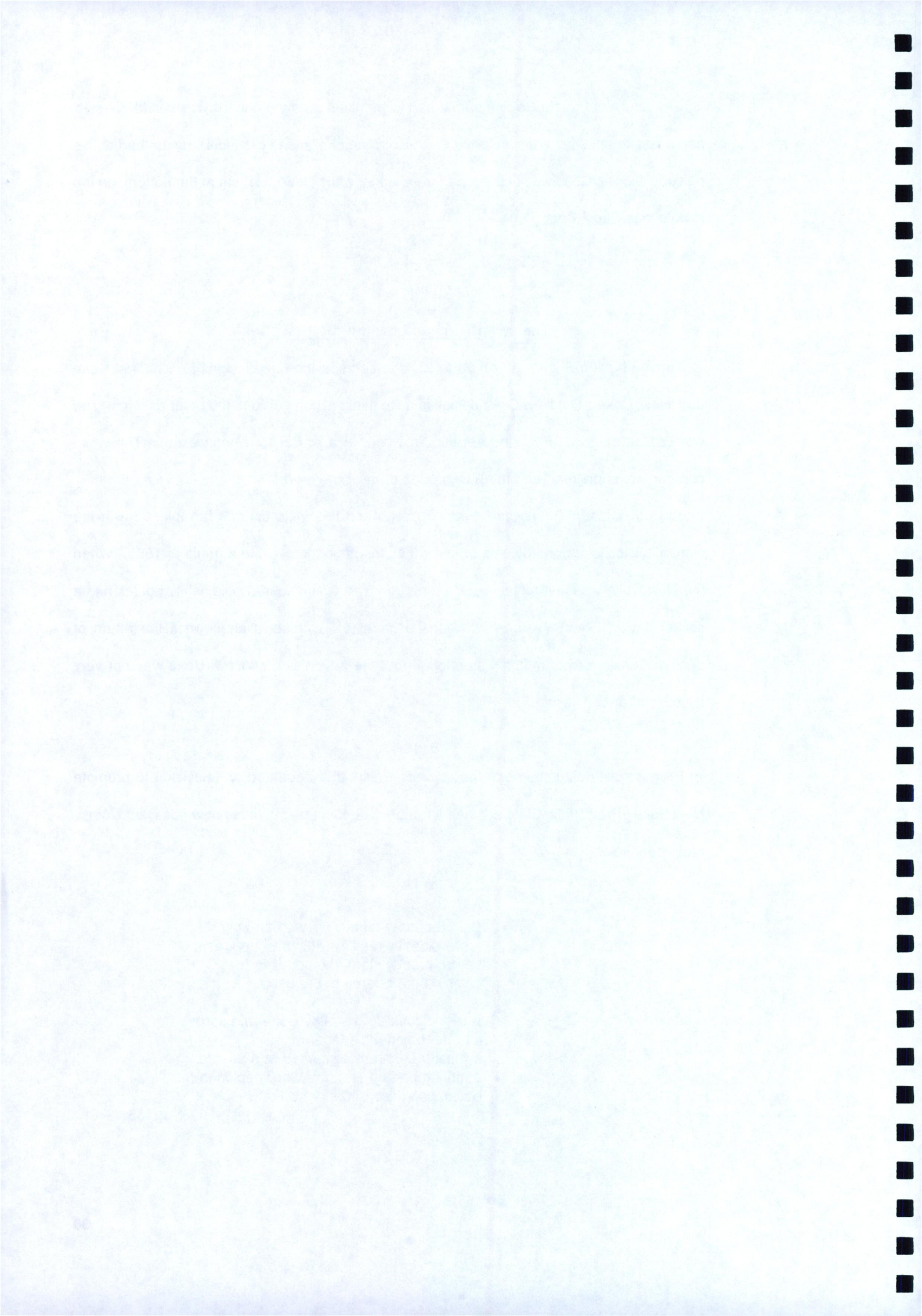
Coca-Cola 'Classic' bears the older script logo and the white contour is replaced with the word 'classic', letting the consumer know that it is the original Coke formula of 1886. When the New Coke was first released, the top of the can was coloured gold, while bottles had a sticker saying 'New'. There had been no need to advertise in abundance the return of original Coke, word of mouth was enough, but the advertising of 'New' Coke was not very successful or convincing.

Prendergast details some of the advertisements that appeared on television to promote New Coke. Previously, Coke ads had a romantic air to them, but these new ads were clumsy and often violent:

"It is Saturday night", showed an ugly professional wrestler twirling an opponent before a body slam, the spinning feet catching the referee in the head.

A teen shook up her New Coke and sprayed it in her boyfriend's face;
a master sergeant screamed at a private;
a girl jumped up and threw her napkin in her boyfriend's face and stormed off.

(Prendergast, 1993, pg. 357/358)



The slogan accompanying these ads read : "It's more than a taste it's the smile on a face", but once the old Coke returned, the running logo for old Coke, "Coke is it" had to be replaced. After all, Coke was now two products and "Coke ARE it" was out of the question. Autumn of 1985 saw slogans such as " We've got a taste for you" and "Coke belongs to you", the ads pushing the two Cokes. In 1986, McCann-Erickson decided that they would no longer advertise the two drinks together. Instead, separate ads and slogans would be used. "Catch the Wave" for New Coke referred to the contour line, the 'wave' of the future. Classic Coke ads were teamed with the "Red, white and you" slogan. Although the company spent far more money on the New Coke advertising than the old, the new formula's share slipped while Classic's climbed steadily. April of 1986 saw Classic Coke at the top of the market but new Coke was floundering at the bottom.

It was an expensive way for the company to learn their mistakes, but at least they had tried. The success of their diet and caffeine-free products seemed to create an air of confidence in the company, encouraging them to rush headlong into replacing the original formula. This replacement would also show that conservatism in the company was no more. Pepsi, of course, was delighted with the whole fiasco and their ads stated clearly that all Coke wanted to do was have a cola tasting like Pepsi. At the end of the day, however, Coke still reigned as the giant. The company returned the original formula to the shelves, and proved to the whole world that they were primarily a consumer-orientated company.

CHAPTER SIX

The recipe for success

The history of Coca-Cola's marketing and advertising: is it a recipe for success or a warning to prepare for change in order to keep up with competition? Chapter Six is a summary of how the company reached the position it is in today through years of trial and error. The critical elements that have made Coca-Cola a household name are identified. In particular, the three key elements in the marketing policy are detailed.

1993 saw another alteration to the Coke logo: the square, which replaced the circle in 1970, was removed and the circle was introduced again. To conclude the chapter, a brief look is taken at some of the more recent advertising.

For a business to survive and be successful for over 100 years is a great achievement. When Pemberton sold the very first Coca-Cola all those years ago he hoped it would be a success; little did he know that it was to become the world's most widely available and popular soft drink.

The Coca-Cola story is one of advancement through trial and error. Many of the problems the company faced were 'self-inflicted', due to their inability to see opportunities, and their conservatism which prevented them from initiating changes.

1956 saw the company joining forces with McCann-Erickson after the realisation that Pepsi-Cola had suddenly become highly prominent and their advertising strategies, unlike Coke's, were adventurous and daring. In the space of five years Pepsi had introduced a family-sized bottle, novel radio jingles, and a diet Pepsi. Coke's shares slipped dramatically and were only restored when they introduced their own family-sized bottle and a diet drink

called TaB in 1963. TaB was a diversified product, but the introduction of a diet drink under the Coke brand name did not occur for another twenty two years. When diet Coke was finally introduced, it surprisingly reached the top of the market very quickly. Was that just luck, or was it the nostalgia behind the ninety-three year old brand name? Whatever it may have been, the success sent the company into a 'brand frenzy' and numerous other drinks were created. So, they learnt from that early mistake that changes were necessary. 'New' Coke, however, created in an euphoric atmosphere after the success of diet Coke, proved the opposite and the lesson learnt from that disaster was the important one of being a consumer-orientated company.

During the 1970's, Project Arden was a daring move to make some fairly radical changes, one being to alter the Coke trademark, untouched since its creation in 1886. The changes resulted in an increased awareness of the company as the 'fifties and 'sixties had seen the logo become 'invisible' due to its familiarity. These risky changes proved successful, and the alteration to the Coke logo, although minimal, had resulted in an increased awareness of the company.

So, in the company's long history they rejoiced in their successes and survived their failures. But why this company? What was so special about the Coca-Cola company that ensured it never collapsed, despite some serious failings and a conservatism in its earlier years? Listed below are the elements that, in my opinion, are responsible for the success of the company; these are what kept the company at the top of the market and what other companies should pay heed to:

- ♦ The three essential elements in successfully marketing a product are image, package and promotion. The Coca-Cola company were constantly aware of these elements and worked them to their best advantage throughout all the advertising.

- ◆ The image of Coca-Cola was carefully created over a number of years. That image remains the same, creating a feeling amongst the consumers of a consistent and faithful product.
- ◆ The drink itself always remained the centre of attention. The ideas in the advertisements were never allowed to overshadow the product in such a way that the viewer had to look twice to see what the product was.
- ◆ Coca-Cola has an unequalled global distribution. This has ensured that Coke is available in every country in the world, making it the world's most recognised and popular soft-drink.
- ◆ The company created a Megabrand range of products. This radical move during the 'eighties gave the company a much needed boost. The Megabrand meant that a number of new products were marketed under the Coca-Cola brand name. Seeing the Coca-Cola brand name ensured the consumer that the product was of a high quality and would fulfil their expectations.
- ◆ Even though Coca-Cola is now a megabrand, the company has honoured the central elements of the business and has not lost control over its image.
- ◆ The company remained loyal to the customer. After the 'New' Coke disaster, the company returned the old Coke to the shelves following the demands of the public. Coke drinkers now saw that the company cared about their desires.

Coca-Cola is a universally affordable, universally acceptable and a universally available soft drink. This marketing policy is the foundation of Coke's success.

Affordability means pricing the drink in such a way that the consumer can afford it, and the company can still profit from it. This affordability also means that advertising must be successful without placing an economic strain on the company.

Acceptability means continuing to promote and improve the image and brand in such a way that it remains popular to the consumer.

Availability means having a global distribution system second to none, backed up by continuing in-depth market research in order to aid the ongoing development of the company and its products.

In short, these three elements are dictated by the need to anticipate the customers' needs and profitably satisfy them.

Some more recent advertising.

Although Coke are still turning to McCann-Erickson for their advertising, it has been stated by Dick Calderhead in Graphis, that the agency is not delivering the goods. "A new man has arrived on the scene, a man with the power to pull big names for successful adverts" (Calderhead). The man is Michael Ovitz, and according to Calderhead, Coke bought 40 spots from him for the same price as McCann charged for just 7. (Calderhead, 1993, pg. 17) Some of Ovitz's adverts have already reached our television screens. The ads still adhere to all that Coke demands: the product is the centre of attention, the ads are in tune with what society is feeling, and the images portrayed are specifically aimed at special market areas. History seems to be repeating itself, however, as the new Ovitz ads have a lot more dynamism than the McCann-Erickson ads. The mood in society has changed again and, as with the D'Arcy agency back in 1956, Coke feels that more dynamism is needed.

One of Ovitz's ads is a collage-type animated sequence, portraying a group of children on their way to school. Needless to say, they drink Coke on their journey and, in typical Coke style, it turns the boredom of going to school into a fascinating journey. The ad is broadcast during children's viewing hours and, though aimed specifically at children, older people have remembered it for its animation. This ad, in particular, is a 'first' for Coke as regards its collage animation which has never been used before. The ad is full of life and very appealing, and the tune teamed with it is also catching and lively.

Another of Ovitz's creations entitled "Ice-pick" is also on the screen. This appears later during the day and consists of a group of young people dancing in what looks like a frozen factory. They beat out a rhythm on frozen pipes and eventually Coke bottles burst through the ice. Personally, I find this ad very abstract and, even though I have seen it repeatedly, I cannot make out what the 'message' is supposed to be.

Another animated sequence is the illustrated 'Polar Bear' series. The message in these ads is very clear. Shown is a group of polar bears sitting in a ring admiring the wonders of the Northern Lights. The viewer can hear them 'ooing' and 'aahing' at the lights, but this delight is intensified when they open their bottles of Coke. Suddenly, the Northern Lights don't seem that impressive any more. The message? Coca-Cola is one of, if not better than, the seven wonders of the World!

Movie premieres on the television channel ITV, are now sponsored by diet Coke. During each break, the sting appears and it follows the routine of a film studio, leading us to believe that we are seeing what is going on behind the scenes of the movie we are actually watching. Sponsorship is now 'old hat' to the Coke company. The past number of years have seen them sponsoring rock-music programmes and sports events. Already in full swing are the preparations for the 1996 Olympics in Coke's hometown - Atlanta. That event, no doubt, will mean glimpses of the famous logo, no matter where the camera focuses!

Fig.34: 1946 logo.



Fig.35: 1970 logo.



Fig.36: 1992 logo.



The Coke logo has another face-lift.

There has been another alteration to the Coke logo in the last two years. The familiar background square has changed back to the circle. The illustration on the opposite page, Figure 34, is an ad dated 1946. Here, the logo appears with the circle background. Figure 35, dated 1970, is the Project Arden revised logo with the square replacing the circle. Now, in 1994, Figure 36 shows the new version with the return of the circle. The famous white contour line has been removed and behind the words Coca-Cola, stands a bottle of Coke. Its similarity to the 1946 version suggests that Coca-Cola may think that society is perhaps turning back to the past. Looking at present fashions, a lot of inspiration has come from the 'sixties and 'seventies, so maybe Ovitz's inspiration comes from this era.

Along with the revised logo, there is a new Coke 'song'. The lyrics read:

"THE SUN WILL ALWAYS SHINE,
THE BIRDS WILL ALWAYS SING.
AS LONG AS THERE IS THIRST,
THERE'S ALWAYS THE REAL THING ".

The slogan that is now accompanying this new logo simply says "*Always Coca-Cola*" and consumers believe it.

CONCLUSION

As was seen throughout the history of Coca-Cola, a new president in the company often brought about radical changes. (Examples being Woodruff's International Division in 1940 and Goizueta's 'New' Coke and Megabrand range). As company presidents come and go, more changes will be initiated. However, the company policy of a universally affordable, universally acceptable and universally available soft drink, will never be changed.

Over one hundred years ago when Asa Candler took over the small fledgling Coca-Cola company from John Pemberton it was destined to be great. Once in Candler's competent hands, the business thrived and continues to do so up to this day. Chapter One outlined briefly the history of Coca-Cola as a company and a drink. The quality of the drink, the careful advertising and promotion, and the dedication to consumer needs are still as important now as they were in the Candler's time.

Chapter two detailed the history behind the creation of the Coca-Cola bottle. A look at the design elements of the bottle proved that, indeed, there is no other bottle similar to the Coke bottle.

Robert Woodruff, the new company president in 1923, was the first of the 'Coke presidents' to initiate some major changes. Although the unique bottle had been on the market for over thirteen years the company were not promoting it to its full potential. Chapter three discussed how Woodruff began to push the bottle which, in turn, meant a new look on the advertising front. He was also responsible for the worldwide marketing and distribution of Coke, made possible by the opportunities presented by America's involvement in the Second World War. Some patriotic advertising was analyzed, proving that even in the face of war Coca-Cola could make people smile.

The 1950's and 1960's were two decades in Coke's history that were riddled with problems. The rival company Pepsi-Cola were becoming highly prominent in the market, and Coca-Cola's market shares fell dramatically as a result. This period in Coke's history was to be the 'make or break' of the company. They were slow to change; conservatism was holding the company back, and they were also suffering from tunnel vision, unaware of opportunities that were there for the taking. Coca-Cola fought back, and although their reactions were painfully slow, as in the diet Coke episode, the company emerged from these tumultuous decades wiser, more daring and, incredibly, more popular than ever before.

Chapter four continued with Coca-Cola's fighting plan. Project Arden was a risky but worthwhile move in 1970 to create a new and increased awareness of the company. An alteration to Frank Robinson's 1886 logo seemed a particularly dangerous move, nonetheless, the results were successful.

During the 1970's segmented marketing was discovered and Coca-Cola's use of this method in their advertising was seen as very sophisticated. Towards the conclusion of this chapter two recent magazine ads were analyzed with regard to their target market audience, detailing the image that Coke was creating for them.

Chapter Five dealt with one of Coke's greatest marketing blunders. The company, under the hand of a new president, Roberto Goizueta, decided to change the formula of Coke. The outrage that was felt by the consumers was something the company had never anticipated. Reactions suggested that changing the formula had violated part of American history. The company turned this 1985 disaster into triumph however, when they returned the old Coke to the shelves. It was a harsh lesson in consumer loyalty, and ninety-three years of nostalgia based on the trademark had proved an important element in their survival.

The design of the 'New' Coke and 'Classic' Coke was also dealt with in this chapter, along with a short section on the advertising for the 'New' Coke.

Finally, chapter six took a look at the 1993 revised Coke logo, which looks remarkably like the version running before Project Arden's changes. The company have new input on the advertising front from Michael Ovitz, the alleged new genius on the American advertising scene. His currently running television commercials are exciting and different, while still keeping within Coke's rigid guidelines.

This chapter also summarised the elements involved in the success of Coca-Cola. A universally affordable, acceptable and available soft drink was, and still is, the company policy, ensuring that in years to come, Coca-Cola will still be the soft-drink giant.

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