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SOP: War, It's the real thing

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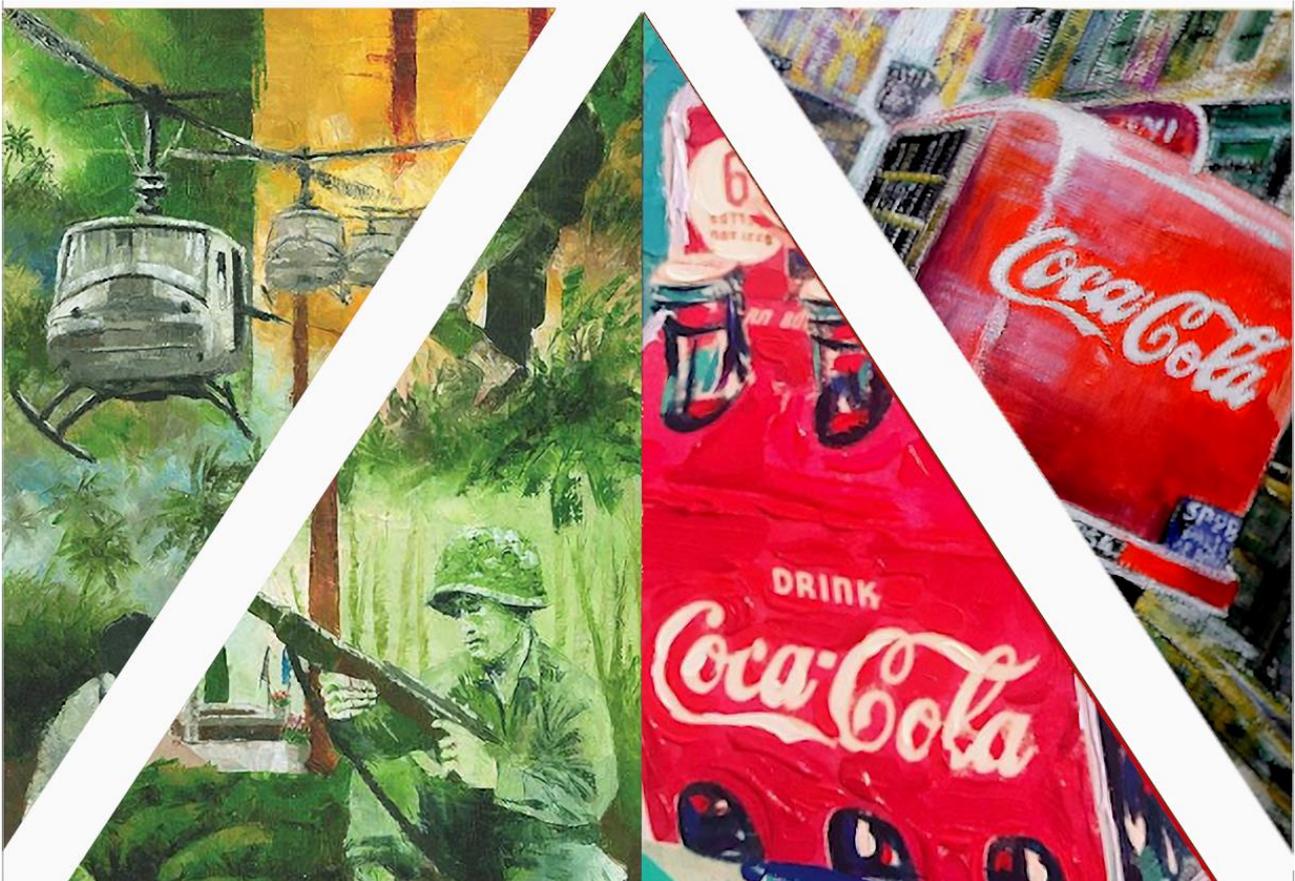
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Resumé

Denne rapport undersøger Coca-Colas marketings strategi, under Vietnam krigen og sammenligner opdagelserne med deres kampagner før og efter Vietnam krigen. I opgaven benyttes historiefaget til at danne et overbillede af den eksterne situation for hvordan krigen udfoldede sig og hvordan USA var involveret i krigen fra 1954 og løj over for det amerikanske samfund. Herefter undersøges det, hvordan Coca-Cola voksede under samme periode og kom ud med reklamen "I'd like to buy the world a coke". Dernæst bliver Coca-Cola reklamen "I'd like to buy the world a coke" analyseret og perspektiveret til en tidligere Coca-Cola reklame "Soldier, refresh yourself", hvor det opdages, at Coca-Cola fokuserer mere på international marketing, i stedet for nationbranding. Coca-Colas branding og marketingsvirkemidler bliver analyseret ud fra reklamen og andre faktorer, hvor det opdages at Coca-Cola brander sig selv med venskab og fred. Endelig bliver perioden efter Vietnam krigen undersøgt for tilfælde, hvor Coca-Cola benytter lignende fænomener som observeret under i "I'd like to buy the world a coke", hvor det påpeges at Coca-Cola holder fast i deres brand værdier fra 1970'erne, som værende multikulturel, venlig og fredskabene.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Resumé | 3 |
| 1.0 Introduction | 5 |
| 1.1 Problem statement | 6 |
| 1.2 Methodology | 6 |
| 2.0 What was the Vietnam war and how were the US and Coca-Cola respectively involved?..... | 7 |
| 2.1 The Vietnam War: The Setup..... | 7 |
| 2.2 The involvement of the US. | 9 |
| 2.3 The War: | 10 |
| 2.4 The Coca-Cola Company..... | 12 |
| 3.0 How does the “I’d Like to buy the world a coke” campaign reflect American society at the time, and how did Coca-Cola use brand activism? | 13 |
| 3.1 I’d Like to buy the world a coke - Analysis..... | 13 |
| Cicero’s pentagram: | 14 |
| The Language:..... | 15 |
| The Colors:..... | 15 |
| The Camera:..... | 15 |
| Sub-Conclusion | 16 |
| 3.2 Perspectivation to “Soldier, Refresh yourself” | 16 |
| Sub-Conclusion | 18 |
| 3.3 Applying the Marketing mix to “I’d Like to buy the world a coke” | 18 |
| Promotion..... | 18 |
| Product | 19 |
| Distribution..... | 20 |
| Price..... | 20 |
| Sub-Conclusion | 21 |
| 4.0 How did Coca-Cola use the aftermath of the Vietnam war as a strategy tool for their next campaigns? | 21 |
| 5.0 Conclusion | 23 |
| Bibliography | 24 |
| 1. Documentaries..... | 24 |
| 2. Videos..... | 24 |
| 3. Internet Pages..... | 25 |
| Appendices..... | 28 |
| Appendix 1- I’d Like To Buy The World a Coke Lyrics | 28 |
| Appendix 2 - Vietnam map 1954 | 29 |
| Appendix 3 - Soldier, Refresh yourself..... | 30 |

1.0 Introduction

The world is constantly changing, sometimes in foreseeable ways, but most of the time in unforeseeable ways. This applies to everything and everyone from government bodies, right down to the individual. Considering the sheer number of variables, you need to take into account in some cases, it seems almost impossible to plan anything a couple of years into the future, without some new factor being introduced that changes everything. This modern game of “survival of the fittest” is what is being played on a wide scale across the world every single day. One of the biggest coincidences that can influence a nation, and, in some cases, entire regions of the world is warfare. While war may stem from many different sources, the consequences of war can result in economic growth of the victor and an economic crash for the loser. Historically before the 20th century and up until World War 2, wars were common and could sometimes start because someone said the wrong thing at the wrong time. Specifically, in Europe there were strong emotions attached to nationality, which fueled the fire between countries. However, as technology has progressed and weapons have become deadlier than ever, the public also became aware of how serious war is. In the course of the cold war the national pride of the United States winning World War 2, had started to wither and the public realized, that they had only traded their feared opponents in Nazi Germany, Italy and Japan out for another. During this long period of fear across the world, the Vietnam war broke out and following the Gulf of Tonkin incident the US decided to participate more actively. During this time the Coca-Cola company were looking to launch a new marketing campaign, and coincidentally created the most famous commercial in the company’s history, which took the world by storm.

In an effort to figure out, what made this marketing campaign special, over the course of this report, I will firstly be accounting for the Vietnam war, how the US and the Coca-Cola company were involved at first, then secondly I will be conducting an analysis on the conducted an analysis of the famous “I’d Like to buy the world a Coke” advertisement and reflect the messaging to American society at the time. Finally, I will make an assessment of how the aftermath of the Vietnam war was used in advertising campaigns afterwards. Finally, the conclusion will answer the problem statement.

1.1 Problem statement

How has Coca-Cola adapted their marketing around the time of the Vietnam war?

The Problem statement will be answered using the following sub-questions:

- What was the Vietnam war? And how were the US & Coca-Cola involved?
- How Does the advertising campaign “I’d like to buy the world a Coke” reflect American society at the time? And how does Coca-Cola use Brand activism?
- How did Coca-Cola use the aftermath of the Vietnam war as a strategy tool for their next campaigns?

1.2 Methodology

In this cross-curricular study, the Coca-Cola brand will be examined with the purpose of uncovering how they have adapted their marketing strategy around the time of the Vietnam war. this will be done, utilizing relevant theory in the subjects History and Marketing. Both quantitative and qualitative data has been taken into consideration. Quantitative data appears in the form of data from the time period in question. Qualitative data appears in the form of articles and websites, discussing and sharing information regarding key events in the time period, which will grant an understanding of the social and political climate of the US. The Historical method appears in an advertisement analysis and perspectivation to the historical context, additionally granting context to the marketing, regarding the external situation. The marketing method will appear in the form of an analysis of Coca-Colas branding, and their tools to adapt to the market by conducting a marketing mix analysis.

2.0 What was the Vietnam war and how were the US and Coca-Cola respectively involved?

2.1 The Vietnam War: The Setup

The Vietnam war as most people know it, began in the 1950s. However, the conflicts in southeast Asia can be traced back to the 1800s during the French colonial period. Vietnam was colonized by France in 1887 and was split into four regions, Cambodia, Tonkin, Annam and Cochinchina, the new french colony was named Indochina. Yet another region, Laos, was another region that was added to the colonized Vietnam in 1893.¹

Before world war 2 broke out, a Vietnamese nationalist named Ho Chi-Minh was trained in the Soviet Union as an agent for Communist international (Comintern). He then founded the Indochinese Communist party in 1930.

During World War 2 France was occupied by Nazi Germany, which left Vietnam to be occupied by Japan. During this period, Vietnamese nationalist groups were fighting the Japanese. This lasted until the end of the war when the British took temporary control of South Vietnam and China who took temporary control of the north.²

When World War 2 had ended in 1945, the alliance between the Soviet Union and America collapsed. As western Europe was liberated, the east was left to be occupied by the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin. During this time the French president, Charles de Gaulle grew increasingly worried that their colonies would fall under communist control. At this time Ho Chi-Minh traveled to Paris in an attempt to attain more autonomy for Vietnam, but it was to no avail. As a result, Ho Chi-Minh returned to Vietnam determined to gain independence, even if he had to fight for it.³

¹ History.com, Vietnam War Timeline, 2017, 13. September. October, <https://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war/vietnam-war-timeline> 1/4/2020

² History.com, Vietnam War, 2009, 29. October, <https://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war/vietnam-war-history> 1/4/2020

³ Biography.com, Ho Chi-Minh Biography, 2014, 7. August, <https://www.biography.com/political-figure/ho-chi-minh> 1/4/2020

This led to the French Indochina War, which began in 1946 and would go on for 8 years with the French getting funding and supplies from the US. Finally, the war along with French' control over Indochina came to an end as France suffered defeat at the battle of Dien Bien Phu on the 14th of May 1954.

By July of that year the final Geneva accords were signed. The parties agreed upon establishing a demarcation line that would separate the north and the south temporarily as a method of cooling off⁴. North Vietnam was controlled by the Vietnamese Communist party, led by Ho Chi-Minh as president. Meanwhile in the south the French was transferring the authority to the state of Vietnam.⁵

During the time of the Indo Chinese war, a man by the name of Ngo Dinh Diem, a Vietnamese political activist and opposer of the French, had fled his home country and sought refuge in America. Here he would network with some powerful individual, namely Secretary of State Dean Acheson and Senator John F. Kennedy. Ngo Dinh Diem would spend most of his time in America, branding himself as a Vietnamese, christian, nationalist who was against Communism and French colonialism.⁶

When Ngo Dinh Diem returned to Vietnam in the summer of 1954, South Vietnam had yet to find a leader. Hence the US suggested making Ngo Dinh Diem the man in charge. The French did not agree, but with the assistance of American advisors Ngo Dinh Diem was appointed Prime minister of South Vietnam. He would later go on to appoint himself as the president of the Republic of Vietnam.⁷

In the aftermath of the French Indochina war, there was a 300-day period in which mass migrations between north and south Vietnam were taking place, the estimated number of refugees that moved from North Vietnam to the south, lies somewhere between 600.000 and one million, most of which are estimated to have been Catholics. In comparison the number of

⁴ Appendix 2, Map of Vietnam 1954. 3/4/2020

⁵ Spector R.H, Britannica.com, 1954-1975, 1998, 20 Jun, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Vietnam-War> 1/4/2020

⁶ Llewellyn, J., Southey, J. & Thompson, S, Alphahistory.com, Ngo Dinh Diem, 2019, 16 June, <https://alphahistory.com/vietnamwar/ngo-dinh-diem/> 2/4/2020

⁷ Spector R.H, Vietnam War, Britannica.com 1954-1975, 1998, 20 Jun, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Vietnam-War> 1/4/2020

refugees from South Vietnam was estimated to have been between 14.000 and 45.000, the majority of these are assumed to have been guerillas.⁸

2.2 The involvement of the US.

While the United States of America had fought side by side, with the Soviet Union in order to defeat Nazi Germany in World War 2. The US would soon realize that they had merely traded one opposing nation out for another, namely Soviet Union. This new superpower, governed and regulated by an all-controlling communist state, stood in contrast to the United States of America, the pinnacle of consumerism and capitalism, governed by democratically elected presidents.

Under the joint occupation of Germany, these differences would come to clash. The Soviets would establish pro-communist regimes in Eastern Europe (East Germany, Hungary, Poland etc.) while the US. would try to prevent communist influence from spreading through western Europe (West Germany, France, Italy Etc.) This marked the beginning of the cold war.

The US. further attempted to prevent the spread of communism, with the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall plan in 1947. The Truman Doctrine pledged to assist governments threatened by communist subversion, whereas the Marshall plan provided economic assistance in attempt to prevent the spread of soviet influence.⁹

This division of eastern and western Europe continued to develop, in the form of The Warsaw Pact and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The latter was formed in 1949, with the member countries including Denmark, Iceland, Italy, West Germany, Portugal, France, the UK and US, as well as other countries supporting the US - and indirectly Capitalism. The Warsaw pact on the other hand was formed by Khrushchev in 1955 and was composed of communist countries, such as the USSR, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and more.¹⁰

It was also during the 1950s the “Domino effect” or the “Domino theory”, was popularized by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. The Domino effect was a theory regarding the “fall” of a

⁸ Caplan B., Econlib.org, Vietnam’s 300 Days of Open Borders: Operation Passage to Freedom, 2012, 3. July, https://www.econlib.org/archives/2012/07/vietnams_300_da.html 2/4/2020

⁹ Blakemore E, Nationalgeographic.com, What was the Cold war?, 2019, 2. March, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/topics/reference/cold-war/>, 4/4/2020

¹⁰ bbc.co.uk.com, What was the Cold war?, 2019, 23. May, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/47122488> ,4/4/2020

noncommunist nation. The theory proposes that when a country surrenders to communism and adopts it into their society, the same will happen to the neighboring countries.¹¹

With the development of the domino theory happening at the same time as the conclusion of the French Indochina war, and the following settlement of a communist North Vietnam, the US attempted to prevent communist influence from spreading, by backing South Vietnam and promoting Ngo Dinh Diem as a leader.¹²

This later escalated into the US backing South Vietnam with Military equipment and training, all in an effort to crack down on the resistance of the guerillas in the south, who were against Ngo Dinh Diem, Especially members of a group named the Viet Cong (Vietnamese Communists), who were assisted by the communists in North Vietnam, did not approve of the leadership of Ngo Dinh Diem or the support of the US. This conflict was the early beginning of the Vietnam war and marks the starting point of America instigating a proxy war.¹³

2.3 The War:

While South Vietnam was governed by Ngo Dinh Diem, they were fighting on two fronts, the external battle against North Vietnam and the internal battle against the guerillas. While in control, due to his mistrust of others, Ngo Dinh Diem awarded his family members high ranking positions in the government. He ordered thousands of arrests and killings against alleged communists in South Vietnam and people who opposed his policies in general. The government officials and police force were also engaging in corruption under the Diem Regime. This led to the growth of the Viet Cong, as many non-communists were also seeking to rebel against his rule.¹⁴

Just three weeks before the assassination of John F Kennedy, In November 1963, Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother was assassinated in a coup d'état by his own generals. He was later replaced by former general, Nguyen van Thieu.

¹¹ Britannica.com, Domino Theory, 1998, 20. July, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/domino-theory> 4/4/2020

¹² History.com, Vietnam War, 2009, 29. October, <https://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war/vietnam-war-history> 8/4/2020

¹³ Szczepanski K, Thoughtco.com, Who were the Vietcong and how did they affect the war?, 2017, 10. August, <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-viet-cong-the-vietnam-war-195432> 8/4/2020

¹⁴ Britannica.com, Ngo, Dinh Diem: Vietnamese Political Leader, 1998, 20. July, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ngo-Dinh-Diem> 9/4/2020

It was Kennedy's successor, Lyndon B Johnson and his secretary of defense Robert McNamara, who increased the military support in South Vietnam. Just a year later, in August of 1964, two US Destroyers were allegedly attacked by North Vietnamese patrol boats in the Gulf of Tonkin. Following the attack, the Gulf of Tonkin resolution was passed, which gave Johnson war making authority. Soon hereafter the US began their bombing raids over North Vietnam under the codename: "Operation Rolling Thunder". Marking the date, when the US officially entered the Vietnam War.

In March of 1965, Johnson decided to send American troops to assist South Vietnam. The first 85.000 combat troops arrived by June, and by the end of the year another 100.000 troops were ordered for immediate dispatch.¹⁵

By 1968 the US had committed approximately 540.000 troops in South Vietnam, However, over time, the government was met with increasing resistance from the American people. The anti-war movement of the 1960s and 1970s would grow in the form of protests, as well as college students fleeing the country in order to avoid drafting. The support of the war was in decline, and by the end of 1967, the public support for the war dropped to less than a third of the population.¹⁶

On the 31st of January 1968 the Tet offensive was initiated. This was a coordinated attack on targets around South Vietnam, which was orchestrated by North Vietnam and the guerillas in an effort to turn the tide of the war. The Tet offensive was unsuccessful, but the American public grew more suspicious as to whether the war was going to be winnable.¹⁷

Then in 1972, President Richard Nixon abolished forced drafting and shifted to an all-volunteer military force. Finally, on January 27, 1973, North and South Vietnam signed the Paris peace accords, which established an immediate cease-fire. The US would withdraw their troops from Vietnam in 60 days, and democratic elections would be restored in South Vietnam.

¹⁵ History.com, Vietnam War, 2009, 29. October, <https://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war/vietnam-war-history> 8/4/2020

¹⁶ Zunes S, Laird J, Nonviolent-conflict.org, The US Anti-Vietnam war movement, 2010, 16. January, <https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/us-anti-vietnam-war-movement-1964-1973/>9/4/2020

¹⁷ Khanacademy.org, *Vietnam War* [Video] 10:40-11:25, <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/us-history/postwarera/1960s-america/v/vietnam-war> 9/4/2020

However, with the US out of the country, the war did not end, and the fighting continued. Finally, all military assistance from the US was cut in 1974 and the war was subsequently concluded in 1975, when the forces of North Vietnam overpowered the south. With the fall of Saigon, Vietnam became a communist nation.¹⁸

Throughout the war, the estimated casualties of the Vietnam war is an estimated 2 million Vietnamese civilians, 1.1 million North Vietnamese troops, 200.000 South Vietnamese troops and 58.000 American soldiers, all of whom lost their lives.¹⁹ The Department of defense has reported that the United States approximately \$198 billion (\$950 billion in 2011s money).²⁰

2.4 The Coca-Cola Company

The Coca-Cola company is today a public limited company that produces and distributes soft drinks worldwide. They were also amongst the many American companies who were around during the time of the Vietnam war.

The first serving of Coca-Cola was poured in 1886, by dr. John Pemberton, who invented the drink in Atlanta.²¹ After Pemberton's death in 1888, Coca-Cola would soon go on to become one of the most fashionable drinks in America, paving the way with an aggressive marketing strategy, fueled by spending 20% of their revenue on marketing.²²

Coca-Cola grew at a fast pace, and their advertising budget surpassed \$1 Million in 1911 (equivalent to \$27 million in 2020s money)²³, and by 1913 their soda was distributed by 2300 wholesalers, and 415.000 retailers.²⁴

¹⁸ Hickman K, Thoughtco.com, Vietnam war: End of the conflict, 2019, 3. July, <https://www.thoughtco.com/vietnam-war-end-of-the-conflict-2361333> 9/4/2020

¹⁹ Sparklenotes.com, Losses, <https://www.sparknotes.com/history/american/vietnamwar/section10/>, 14/4/2020

²⁰ Rohn A, thevietnamwar.info, How much did the Vietnam war cost?, 2014, 22. January, <https://thevietnamwar.info/how-much-vietnam-war-cost/>, 10/4/2020

²¹ Coca-colacompany.com, Our company, <https://www.coca-colacompany.com/company> 10/4/2020

²² Coke versus Pepsi: The Battle of the Century[Documentary], 2014, 8:05-8:30 10/4/2020

²³ Webster I, CPI inflator, U.S. Inflation rate, \$1,000,000 from 1911 to 2020, 2014, <https://www.in2013dollars.com/us/inflation/1911>, 10/4/2020

²⁴ The Coca-Cola Company, 125 years of sharing happiness, Page 7, 2011 <https://www.coca-colacompany.com/content/dam/journey/us/en/our-company/history/coca-cola-a-short-history-125-years-booklet.pdf> 10/4/2020

Coca-Cola went on to reimagine Father Christmas in a series of advertisements in the 1920s and 1930s. Illustrated by Haddon Sundblom, who combined his Scandinavian heritage and inspiration of the poem “A Visit from St. Nicholas” to create a Santa Claus who was plumb, realistic, jolly and featuring the red and white colors of the Coca-Cola logo.²⁵

By the time of world war 2, Coca-Cola had production sites internationally. In Nazi Germany, Max Keith was in control of Coca-Cola Germany and was also a collaborator of the third Reich, but following the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941 and the US making a formal entry in World War 2, all Coca-Cola production seized in Germany.²⁶ Soon after Robert Woodruff, CEO of Coca-Cola (1923-1984) in 1943 stated “we will make sure, that our fighting men get a bottle of Coca-Cola where ever they are”²⁷, Coca-Cola began to supply the American army with Coca-Cola for a nickel, regardless of the costs associated with production.

Moving forward to the late 1960s and early 1970s when the Vietnam war was at its peak, and at it’s most unpopular in the US, Coca-Cola was no longer marketing their support of the American military, but they did launch one of their most iconic advertisements in the company’s history. “I’d Like to Buy the world a Coke” was launched in 1971 and became an international hit.²⁸

3.0 How does the “I’d Like to buy the world a coke” campaign reflect American society at the time, and how did Coca-Cola use brand activism?

3.1 I’d Like to buy the world a coke - Analysis

The “I’d like to buy the world a coke” campaign, or “Hilltop” as some people know it was originally launched in 1971 as a radio ad, before it was adapted to television. The Television advertisement depicts a group of multi-ethnic young people, who are standing atop a hill on a sunny day. The young people are looking at the skies with a bottle of Coca-Cola each, while singing the song “I’d Like to buy the world a coke”. The song itself is short, lasting about a minute and repeats the same

²⁵ Ibid: Page 13

²⁶ Echevarria G, Businessinsider.com, Why Coca-Cola invented Fanta in Nazi Germany, 2019, 15. November, <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-coca-cola-invented-fanta-in-nazi-germany-2019-11?r=US&IR=T> 10/4/2020

²⁷ Coke versus Pepsi: The Battle of the Century[Documentary], 2014, 13:00-13:15, 10/4/2020

²⁸ The Coca-Cola Company, 125 years of sharing happiness, Page 17, 2011, <https://www.coca-colacompany.com/content/dam/journey/us/en/our-company/history/coca-cola-a-short-hisotry-125-years-booklet.pdf> 10/4/2020

chorus twice.²⁹ Finally the advertisement ends with a message scrolling across the video, explaining to the viewer, that Coca-Cola assembled these young people from around the world on a this hilltop in Italy to bring this message.

The advertisement became an international classic and was marked as one of the most popular commercials ever.³⁰ A version of the song would later be created without the Coca-Cola reference.

Cicero's pentagram:

The Sender of the advertisement is the Coca-Cola company, who have financed the production on their behalf, with the intent of raising brand awareness, and creating a positive brand image.

The Receiver of the advertisement is Coca-Colas target group, which at this point in time is international and multi-ethnic consumers, this is reflected by the young people in the commercial who are not only multi-ethnic, but also dressed in a variety of different styles, such as polos, business suits, dresses and shorts.

The subject of the commercial is to bring people together, regardless of background, ethnicity or class. Anyone can drink a bottle of Coca-Cola and sing a song. As quoted by co-creator Bill Backer. *"it was a product saying, we can be a social catalyst, that can bring people together, talk things over and sometimes communications get better, if you are sitting over a bottle of coke."*³¹

The situation of America was somewhat unstable during the 1960s through 1970s, due to the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King in the 1960s, the civil rights movement and the ongoing Vietnam war, which by the time of the commercials aired, had lasted for more than 16 years. The US had been involved through most of the war, although they didn't start sending troops until 1965. Along with the cold war, and the US' constant attempts at containing communism, it ended up giving rise to the opinion of war being unnecessary and the growing popularity of the anti-war movement.

²⁹ Appendix 1 - I'd Like to buy the world a coke, Lyrics, 12/4/2020

³⁰ The Coca-Cola Company, 125 years of sharing happiness, Page 17, 2011, <https://www.coca-colacompany.com/content/dam/journey/us/en/our-company/history/coca-cola-a-short-history-125-years-booklet.pdf> 10/4/2020

³¹ Coca-cola company, Bill Backer interviewed about "I'd like to buy the world a coke" 2011, 7. October, <https://www.coca-colacompany.com/news/id-like-to-buy-the-world-a-coke>, 1:20-1:36, 11/4/2020

The Language:

The written language is mostly in English, but also includes Coca-Cola bottles with translated logos to fit the different nationalities, there are 5 observable bottles with foreign languages printed on it. The language of the song is in English and is performed in a light tone with messaging of generosity "I'd like to teach the world to sing"³². The final message at the end of the advertisement is also in English, but it doesn't advertise a sale. It just tells a bit about the background of the video and shows a bottle of Coca-Cola, along with their slogan at the time, which was "*It's the real thing*"³³

The Colors:

The advertisement uses mainly bright colors, with the green grass, blue sky and orange colored clothing. This along with the happy tone of the song and the happy people, is used to create an emotional effect of pathos and appeal by creating a happy and peaceful environment of natural colors. The result is an emotional selling proposition which Coca-Cola uses to associate their product with peace and happiness. To is in order to compensate for the language barrier on the international market, as the advertisement is partly a song performed in English, the colors and the tone are used to convey the same message as the song, just as the bottles in different languages, which conveys that the viewer doesn't have to be English speaking or understand the song, in order to understand the harmony of the advertisement.

The Camera:

The camera perspective starts up close to a young woman's face, before zooming out as she sings, revealing the other singers. The camera then slowly pans from left to right, at a low angle to show the different singers, along with their Coca-Cola bottles. The camera then cuts to a regular angle, where it continues to pan from left to right, before it cuts to a side view of the group, to reveal there are more people singing. Then it cuts to a closeup of the singers' faces, before cutting to a closeup of the Coca-Cola bottles. Finally, the Advertisement ends with the camera zooming out from a high angle, revealing the big group of people standing in the shape of a rigid fan, looking across a green field.

³² Appendix 1- I'd Like to buy the world a coke, Lyrics. 12/4/2020

³³ Coca-Cola, youtube.com, 1971 - 'Hilltop' | "I'd like to buy the world a Coke"[Video], 2012, 6th March, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VM2eLhvsSM>, 12/4/2020

Sub-Conclusion

The “I’d like to buy the world a coke” advertisement focuses on conveying a message of cultural and racial inclusion, using light colors for the video and a light tone for the song, they are broadcasting a message of peace during a dark time in American history. The video proposes that the world can stand together in peace regardless of their differences and regardless of the circumstances. Or as co-creator Bill Backer put it; *“it was a product saying, we can be a social catalyst, that can bring people together, talk things over and sometimes communications get better, if you are sitting over a bottle of coke.”*³⁴

3.2 Perspectivation to “Soldier, Refresh yourself”

After America officially entered World War 2, a series of advertisements in magazines and newspapers were launched by Coca-Cola, one of which being “Soldier, refresh yourself” which launched in 1944. In an effort to use American patriotism as nation branding. Coca-Cola would also as mentioned previously, supply the military with Coca-Cola. This was in an effort to associate the soda and the brand with America and American values. The campaign was so successful that some American soldiers would share the saying; *“What we are fighting for is the right to have a Coca-Cola and a hamburger when we go home”*³⁵

The Soldiers depicted in “Soldier, Refresh yourself” are all Caucasian, which is reminiscent of Coca-Cola’s advertisement around the early 1900s, where their advertising strategy revolved around portraying the brand as American, which at the time meant innocent, hardworking and white.

Contrasting “I’d like to buy the world a coke” advertisement, there is direct support from Coca-Cola to the military. The soldiers are portrayed in bright colors, with an afternoon hue and are relaxing after hard work, with one soldier in the foreground drinking a bottle of Coca-Cola. The text at the bottom of the image reads; *“...Have a Coke they say. Coca Cola is a refreshing reminder of what they left behind”*.³⁶ “Soldier, refresh yourself” doesn’t depict American soldiers as fighting men, but shows the human side of the soldiers’ lives. The setting, being at a postal office at

³⁴ Coca-cola company, Bill Backer interviewed about “I’d like to buy the world a coke”2011, 7. October, <https://www.coca-colacompany.com/news/id-like-to-buy-the-world-a-coke>, 1:20-1:36, 11/4/2020

³⁵ Coke versus Pepsi: The Battle of the Century[Documentary], 2014, 13:30-13:45, 12/4/2020

³⁶ Appendix 3, Soldier, Refresh yourself, 13/4/2020

afternoon, depicts the deserved relaxation after a hard day's work. Hard work being a core element of the American dream.

While "Soldier, Refresh yourself" does focus on the more human aspect of a day in the life of a soldier, it focuses on conveying that the young men fighting for America are doing so with honor and a smile. This was the patriotism of America at the time.

However, in 1971 the year of "I'd like to buy the world a coke", patriotism wasn't quite as popular. The American government also didn't help their relations to the public by saying that the war was about to be won, when in reality there was no end in sight.

Meanwhile a new generation had grown up and was beginning to form a counterculture against warfare and forced drafting. This counterculture would also be known as the antiwar movement. People, who after more than a decade of cold war, were tired and frustrated with the US government for deciding to go to war and sending of hundreds of thousands of young men to Vietnam with the purpose of stopping communism and running the risk of nuclear warfare.³⁷

The Soviet Union was a threat to American values, but the danger was more indirect than the Nazis in World War 2, as the danger was not a military force that threatened to conquer the world, but the spreading of communism. Communism was indeed a threat to America and it's values, but only because it represented the opposite of what America stood for, and due to the increased amount of countries adopting communism, it may have been seen as a force that was developing against the US.

The Public was much more concerned with the danger of nuclear warfare. It was a threat to all of the world, and many people feared for their lives because of it. This danger was not present during World War 2, but the mindset of going to war had also changed. America would assist Europe in taking down Nazi Germany directly, but the cold war with the soviets were not as direct.

Therefore, a conflict could unfold through many confrontations that didn't result in a declaration

³⁷ Zeus S & Laird J, nonviolent-conflict.org, 2010, 16 January, <https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/us-anti-vietnam-war-movement-1964-1973/>, 9/4/2020

of war. Among these were the Cuban missile crisis, the Vietnam war and espionage the in occupied Germany.

Under these circumstances “I’d like to buy the world a Coke”, doesn’t criticize the American government or support them. However, it does use brand activism by subtly spreading a message about harmony, cooperation and friendship despite the differences in nationalities, language or skin color. This was largely the sentiment of the antiwar movement of the 1960s and 1970s, who had been protesting against the actions of the American government for not ending the war another way.³⁸

Sub-Conclusion

The different advertisements are reflecting the average American’s values in their respective time periods of the 1940s and early 1970s. with the “Soldier. Refresh yourself” advertisement showcasing the American patriotism of World War 2, and the “I’d like to buy the world a coke” advertisement showing the American citizens’ desire to live in peace and harmony in the time of the cold war and the Vietnam war.

3.3 Applying the Marketing mix to “I’d Like to buy the world a coke”

Promotion

The chosen tool from the promotion mix is advertising and uses television as media class. Television is one of the most effective channels to spread legitimized advertisements on a wide scale and in the 1970s the television media would have been stronger due to the smaller amounts of channels to advertise on. However, it wasn’t cheap to produce and distribute an ad through multiple media vehicles, especially as “I’d like to buy the world a coke” was broadcast internationally to English speaking countries.

From the beginning of the advertisement, it grabs the viewers’ attention by showing a young woman singing. There is no context, as to what the situation is, or why she is there, but as the song goes on, more and more young people are revealed to be singing along. This creates interest,

³⁸ Zeus S & Laird J, nonviolent-conflict.org, 2010, 16 january, <https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/us-anti-vietnam-war-movement-1964-1973/>, 9/4/2020

as it shows a bunch of people, who are dressed differently and come from different countries, all of whom are singing in harmony, with a bottle of Coca-Cola in their hands, this is where Desire is created. The association of how these different people can sing along in harmony regardless of race, class or gender, the desire is created by the idea of despite all of those differences, people can still sing together, and drink Coca-Cola together. Finally, action is incentivized through the final showing of the Coca-Cola bottle, along with the slogan "It's the real thing"³⁹

The advertisement also assists in positioning the product to match Coca-Cola's value proposition through the advertising message of peace and wholesomeness that most people can relate to, by including positive words in the song such as "Home, Harmony and Love"⁴⁰. This is particularly apparent when considering the time period and American culture at the time.

Product

Coca-Cola as a product, is a tangible convenience product that is purchased frequently, usually without much consideration or out of just pure habit. With the core benefit (core product) being a drink to quench the thirst, by this metric Coca-Cola competes against everything from water to beer. However, the actual product is where Coca-Cola's differentiation stands apart. The styling and design of the bottle and can, with the red and white colors, that, as mentioned previously also have become the colors of Santa Claus, and the color red being one of the colors that catch the attention of the eye the most effectively. The color red symbolizes romance and heroism⁴¹ while the color white symbolizes innocence, purity and wholeness.⁴² Then there are the curves of the bottles, referencing the company's history of bottling, the design of the curving bottle dates back to approximately 1916.⁴³ All of these elements create the aesthetic quality of the Coca-Cola product. Then finally through the augmented product the brand value makes up the main differentiation of Coca-Cola's identity as a brand, through many years of marketing they have

³⁹ Coca-Cola, Youtube.com, *Coca-Cola, 1971 - 'Hilltop' | "I'd like to buy the world a Coke", 2011, 27 April*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VM2eLhvsSM> 12/4/2020

⁴⁰ Appendix 1, I'd like to buy the world a coke lyrics, 12/4/2020

⁴¹ Empowered by color, The Color of Red, 2010, <https://www.empower-yourself-with-color-psychology.com/color-red.html>, 14/4/2020

⁴² Ibid: The color white

⁴³ The Coca-Cola Company, 125 years of sharing happiness, Page 9, 2011, <https://www.coca-colacompany.com/content/dam/journey/us/en/our-company/history/coca-cola-a-short-history-125-years-booklet.pdf> 10/4/2020

created a brand image of wholesome family friendliness, and “I’d like to buy the world a coke” aims to enforce that brand image.

On the PLC curve, Coca-Cola in the 1970s was still in the growth phase, when it comes to the international market, but on the American market it could be argued that they were in the early maturing phase, because of the time they had been a domestic market leader, and the popularity of their product across the country.

Distribution

Coca-Cola uses two different types of distribution chains. The first method is the producer to wholesaler, where the production of Coca-Cola syrup is would be distributed in larger bulks to bottling plants. In the plants the syrup gets mixed with carbonated water and then distributed to retailers. Secondly Coca-Cola uses producer to retailer, where they ship the syrup directly to independent restaurants or drug stores, that had their own soda fountain. In the fountain the syrup is mixed with carbonated water to be served on demand. This also allows for other syrup flavors to be mixed with Coca-Cola, for instance, Cherry Coke.

Due to the two channels granting access to a variety of distributors and the products having a long shelf life (6-9 months)⁴⁴. Coca-Cola has the right combination to conduct intensive distribution, where any retailer can sell their product, both in bottled form and in glass.

Price

In 1982, the price of a 1-liter bottle of Coca-Cola was 99 cents US, in comparison the price of a 2-liter bottle of Pepsi was 89 cents in 1985.⁴⁵ Comparing the prices and considering Pepsi being one of Coca-Colas biggest domestic competitors from the 1970s and onwards, this indicates that Coca-Cola isn’t conducting competitor-oriented pricing. They are also not using the cost-based pricing, as the products of Pepsi and Coca-Cola are very similar. Therefore, the pricing strategy is motivated by a combination of positioning strategy and price skimming strategy, indicated by how Coca-Cola is pricing their Soft drinks slightly higher than the competition, in order to maintain the brand image of quality.

⁴⁴ Eatbydate.com, How long do softdrinks last?, 2013, <https://www.eatbydate.com/drinks/how-long-does-coke-last-shelf-life-expiration-date/>, 14/4/2020

⁴⁵ Sodaisgood.blogspot.com, The History of Coca-Cola Prices, 2008, 28 September, <http://sodaisgood.blogspot.com/2008/09/history-of-coca-cola-prices.html>, 14/4/2020

Sub-Conclusion

With the tools depicted in the Marketing mix, we can identify that the factor that Coca-Cola can adapt the most in order to retain their goals, when the market changes is their promotion aspect. This was also the factor that the Coca-Cola company utilized in the “I’d like to buy the world a coke” advertisement during the Vietnam war in a way that was aligned with Coca-Colas’ brand values of family friendliness and wholesomeness. The product itself less flexible, due to the packaging being the main thing to adapt without launching a new product. The pricing and distribution can be changed to adapt economic changes, although it’s only through downsizing.

4.0 How did Coca-Cola use the aftermath of the Vietnam war as a strategy tool for their next campaigns?

With the Vietnam war ending in a defeat for the US and the communists overtaking Vietnam, the American soldiers returned to the home to an America, that had just lost its first war. This was a burden on American history and tainted the belief that America was good and just. It was a very negative situation for America, but Coca-Cola managed, through their advertising strategy, to re-brand Coca-Cola as an inclusive and multicultural brand, instead of an exclusively American brand and this set the precedent for the messaging that was to come from the Coca-Cola company.

Despite the conflicts between the US and Communist interests Coca-Cola entered the Chinese market in 1978 and in 1979 they launched the “Mean Joe Greene” advertisement⁴⁶. The Advertisement depicts African American football player Joe Greene, after a game of American football, when a child offers him a bottle of coke. He initially declines, but he eventually gives in and tosses a t-shirt as means of thanking the kid.⁴⁷ Although this campaign doesn’t address the international conflicts that “I’d like to buy the world a coke” did, it looks inward on racial issues in America at the time. Joe Greene, an almost 2m tall black American known for being an

⁴⁶ The Coca-Cola Company, 125 years of sharing happiness, Page 17-20, 2011, <https://www.coca-colacompany.com/content/dam/journey/us/en/our-company/history/coca-cola-a-short-hisotry-125-years-booklet.pdf> 10/4/2020

⁴⁷ Coca-Cola, Coca-Cola Classic ad: ‘Mean’ Joe Greene [Full Version] (1979) [Video], 2007, 17 July, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xffOCZYX6F8>, 15/4/2020

intimidating player⁴⁸, was used in the advertising as a way of showing that even the biggest and most intimidating people, can warm up over a bottle of coke. Of course, this has little to do with the outcome of the Vietnam war, but it does show how in one of Americas darker times in history, Coca-Cola brings inclusive advertising and tries to make a lighthearted campaign to build bridges between different communities.

It wouldn't be until 2013 before Coca-Cola again would craft an advertising campaign to try and bring two countries together, with the "small world machines" campaign. The premise was not an advertisement, but a publicity campaign where Coca-Cola put up two vending machines with cameras and screens, one in New Delhi India, and one in Lahore Pakistan. The two machines were connected and were broadcasting the camera feed to one another, allowing for regular people to see and talk to each other. The machines displayed commands, such as "wave, touch hands, dance or draw a pattern" and after a series of the displayed activities were completed the participants were rewarded with a can of Coca-Cola.⁴⁹

Following their independence in 1947, like Vietnam, this former British colony was also separated, but where the Vietnamese separation originated in the peace negotiations after the French Indochina war, this was the Muslim and Hindu communities separating into what we know today as India and Pakistan. This has caused severe political and religious tension between the countries, resulting in numerous wars and attacks.⁵⁰

In addition to the history of the countries the times have also changed a lot since the 70s. Technology has progressed, the Berlin Wall has fallen and the Soviet Union is no more. Without a global spanning conflict of interest, like during the cold war, there is not the same incentive to include the entire world in a single marketing campaign. This is however, not the only difference from "I'd like to buy the world a coke".

⁴⁸ Myerberg P, which nickname came first at North Texas? 'Mean Joe' Greene or Mean Green?, 2015, 15 August, <https://ftw.usatoday.com/2015/08/mean-green-mean-joe-green-nickname-origins>, 15/4/2020

⁴⁹ *Coca-Cola, Small World Machines - Bringing India & Pakistan Together*[Video], 2013,19 May, https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=163&v=ts_4vOUDImE&feature=emb_title, 15/4/2020

⁵⁰ Council of foreign relations, Conflict between India and Pakistan, 2016, 3. October, <https://www.cfr.org/interactive/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-between-india-and-pakistan>, 15/4/2020

The “small world machines” campaign directly refers to the issues between the two countries, by setting up the machines specifically for the two countries and in the video promoting the campaign, they also mention the complicated relations between India and Pakistan. *“the relationship between India and Pakistan is one that has seen a lot of lows”*⁵¹.

As opposed to the subtle brand activism of the “I’d like to buy the world a coke”, where neither the Vietnam war, nor the Cold war is mentioned, but the advertisement brings a message of friendship and peace across the world, the “Small world machines” campaign seeks to bridge the gap between Pakistan and India in similar way as “I’d like to buy the world a coke”, but instead of bringing a message of peace and friendliness amongst everyone, it points specifically at India and Pakistan and attempts to build a bridge, despite their conflicts.

Overall, Coca-Cola’s marketing and positioning strategy has not been influenced by the loss of the Vietnam war, they have only continued to position themselves as a family friendly and culturally diverse brand that seeks to connect people from all walks of life, ever since the launch of “I’d like to buy the world a coke” back in 1971.

5.0 Conclusion

It can be concluded, that throughout the time of World War 2 and the Vietnam war, there has been an observable difference in the marketing strategy of Coca-Cola, along with the change in public perception towards the government in America. The America of the early 1900s had the reputation of being just and respected, but over the course of the Vietnam war they would gradually lose the respect of the people. Forced drafting and government lies, along with the possibility of nuclear warfare, would show a side of the American government that hadn’t been seen before. The American people would protest and show disapproval of the actions of their government and soon after, their voices would echo into the world of advertising.

This is when Coca-Cola modified their marketing and positioning strategy to adapt to the market, using promotion theory and brand activism. All while they have retained their original brand image of family friendliness, since their foundation in 1886. However, they have continually adapted

⁵¹ Coca-Cola, Youtube, *Small World Machines - Bringing India & Pakistan Together*[Video], 00:00-00:20, 2013, 19 May, https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=163&v=ts_4vOUDImE&feature=emb_title, 15/4/2020

meaning of family and inclusion as time has passed. From the patriotic happy go lucky American “Soldier, refresh yourself” advertising in the 1940s, to the multi-cultural diversification and peace messaging of 1971s’ “I’d Like to buy the world a coke” and beyond. Although America did lose the Vietnam war in the end and communism did overtake Vietnam. Coca-Cola didn’t change their marketing strategy to be focused around appealing to the communist east but continued to spread positive messaging about diversity and friendship. The core idea throughout all of it being; although people are different and tensions may be high, everything gets easier when talking over a bottle of Coca-Cola. This concept was used as recently as in 2013, when Coca-Cola installed two vending machines that allowed for people in new Delhi to see people in Lahore and vice versa. Building a bridge to make two separated communities come a little closer.

By carefully observing their surroundings in the political and social environment, Coca-Cola have allowed themselves to create a timeless brand messaging that aligns with their values as company, as well as the values of America and the people around the world.

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Appendices

Appendix 1- I'd Like To Buy The World a Coke Lyrics

I'd like to buy the world a home
And furnish it with love
Grow apple trees and honey bees
And snow white turtle doves

(Chorus)

I'd like to teach the world to sing
In perfect harmony
I'd like to buy the world a Coke
And keep it company
That's the real thing

(Chorus)

(Chorus 2)

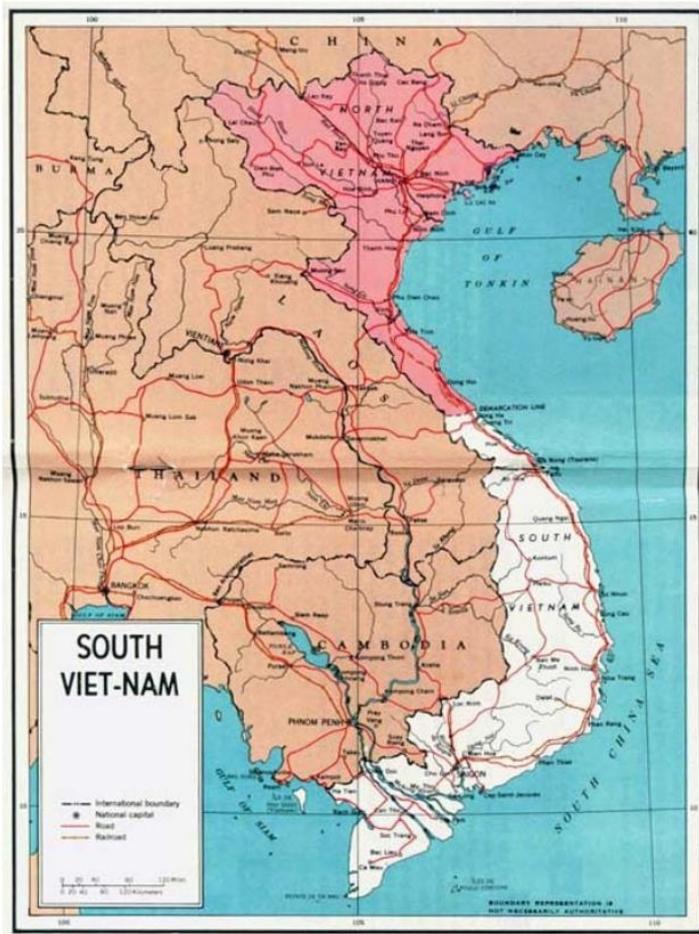
What the world wants today
Is the real thing

What the world wants today
Is the real thing

Source: Genius.com

Net Address: <https://genius.com/Coca-cola-id-like-to-buy-the-world-a-coke-lyrics>

Appendix 2 - Vietnam map 1954



Source: Alphahistory.com

Web Address: <https://alphahistory.com/vietnamwar/vietnam-war-maps/>

Appendix 3 - Soldier, Refresh yourself

Have a "Coke" = Soldier, refresh yourself



...or a way to relax in camp

From southern camps with their moss-hung cypresses to camps near the north woods, there's one place soldiers can relax—the Post Exchange. There they settle down to "shoot the breeze" together. Have a "Coke", they say. Coca-Cola is a refreshing reminder of what they left behind. On "Company Street" in camp as on Main Street at home,

Coca-Cola stands for the peace that refreshes. In your own refrigerator, ice-cold bottles of Coca-Cola are a symbol of a friendly way of living. * * *

Our fighting men meet up with Coca-Cola every place overseas. Coca-Cola has become a globe-trotting way back home. Even with war, Coca-Cola makes it bottled right on the spot in over 35 allied and neutral nations.



"Coke" is Coca-Cola. It's natural for popular names to acquire friendly alternatives. That's why you hear Coca-Cola called "Coke".

Source: Envisioningtheamericandream.com

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