

Rockstar Juiced Final Strategy Paper

INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of this century, energy drink popularity has become a widespread phenomenon sweeping the United States and other parts of the world. According to Business Wire (2005), "energy drinks are defined as beverages that specifically claim to provide an energy or stimulation boost. These products also have a marketing position which stresses energy." In 1997, Red Bull was the first energy drink introduced in the United States. Currently, Red Bull is the leading energy drink brand and dominates about half of the market share. Many other competitors are emerging and inventing brands for specific niche markets.

Rockstar Incorporated, maker of Rockstar Energy Drinks, was created in January 2001 by Russ Weiner. Rockstar was the first energy drink brand to distinguish itself with 16-ounce packaging. PR Newswire says the, "the introduction of Rockstar created the 16-ounce energy drink category, and Rockstar has continued the innovation with the first 16-ounce diet energy drink, the first 16-ounce energy drink multi-packs, and the first energy drink brand to offer multiple package sizes of their brand favorite." The Rockstar product line has expanded rapidly to include 24-ounce sizes and a greater assortment to choose from. These include the Original, Sugar-Free, Zero Carb, Punched, varieties, and Juiced in original, guava, and pomegranate flavors.

Rockstar Juiced has the potential to differentiate itself from the majority of the energy drink market because it contains 50 percent juice content. "Innovation in the energy and sports drinks market is imperative to growth, as consumers are always looking for the next big thing, and are keen to optimize energy and performance levels through the food and drink they consume" (Lewis, 2007). So far, not many energy drink brands other than Red Bull have done much advertising. This provides Rockstar Juiced a chance to further distinguish itself from the competition. Understanding what motivates a consumer to purchase a particular product is essential to constructing a strategy that will enable Rockstar Incorporated to develop and expand its market share, particularly with the Juiced line of products.

THE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Rockstar Brand's Business Problem

An initial task of account planners is to find the business reason why the client is talking to the ad agency in the first place. In this case, the client is Rockstar Incorporated's President and Chief Executive Officer, Russ Weiner, and the product is Rockstar Juiced. Weiner's "goal is to be the No. 1 energy drink in the United States" (Fuhrman, 2005). Currently, the original Rockstar is the third top energy drink sold in the United States. To help the client achieve his goal and see where advertising can play a role, it must first be determined what problems may be holding back the Rockstar brand and, specifically, Rockstar Juiced from becoming the number one energy drink in category sales.

At present, the most negative issue for Rockstar Juiced is a lack of brand awareness. A damaging aspect for the overall energy drink market is the existing perception that they are unhealthy. There is also an increasing amount of energy drink competitors emerging. This means that Rockstar Juiced must find a way to distinguish itself from the competition.

By contrast, a positive problem that presents an opportunity for Rockstar Juiced is being launched under the Rockstar brand and having a distribution agreement with Coca-Cola. Another

advantage is that Rockstar Incorporated is already an established brand that should have enough accumulated funds to start advertising its products. The particular product, Rockstar Juiced, has the unique benefit of containing 50 percent juice content. This may allow it to be positioned as a healthier alternative to other energy drinks, which will help differentiate Rockstar Juiced from rest of the market.

Interrogation of Rockstar Juiced's Marketing Mix

"Before we can define the role advertising can play we have to understand all the other components of the mix for our brand, and how they interrelate" (Butterfield, p. 34). To best determine what is impeding Rockstar Juiced from becoming the top-selling energy drink in the United States, it is important to analyze Rockstar's current marketing mix. This includes the distribution, pricing, product, and historical promotion.

Distribution

As of April 28, 2005, Rockstar Incorporated made a distribution deal with Coca-Cola North America (CCNA) and Coca-Cola Enterprises (CCE). "CCE will distribute Rockstar in all its territories covered in the distribution agreement in the U.S. and Canada, except the Northwest and Northern California divisions of CCE" (PR Newswire, 2005). Coca-Cola Enterprises (CCE) is the world's largest marketer, distributor, and producer of bottle and can non-alcoholic beverages. Rockstar's executive vice-president of sales and distribution, Joey Cannata, mentions that the best part of the deal is that "Coca-Cola has strong relationships in institutional and contract accounts such as colleges, universities, and cruise ships, vending machines and cold drink equipment" (Fuhrman, 2005). Rockstar's popularity combined with Coca-Cola's worldwide distribution system gives the brand and its products a huge advantage because they are currently available at all major gas station, grocery, and pharmacy chains.

Almost all stores carry the original and sugar-free Rockstar energy drinks, but the Juiced product line is carried at fewer places. Out of the three Rockstar Juiced flavors, the original orange, mango, and passion fruit combination is more often available than the guava or pomegranate flavors. This could present a problem which Rockstar Incorporated should address by matching distribution of Juiced with that of the Original Rockstar. Taking advantage of the Coca-Cola deal by furthering distribution of *all three* Juiced flavors will increase the odds of people trying it and improve brand awareness.

Price

Energy drinks tend to be more expensive than other non-alcoholic beverages, such as sodas and juices. The price of a Rockstar Juiced 16-ounce can costs two dollars, which is the average cost for most energy drinks. Usually, the only way to get energy drinks a little cheaper than two dollars each is by buying them in four-packs. Rockstar Juiced in the original orange, mango, and passion fruit combination is available in four-packs at major grocery, food, wholesale, and discount retail chains.

Regarding price, the Rockstar owner and our client, Russ Weiner, says "Energy drinks are a status drink. It's a brand drink, because it's expensive. No one coughs up two dollars plus for a soda. People make a real decision when they are spending that much money for a drink" (Furhman, 2005). Rockstar even offers an alternative for people who want extra energy by being one of the first to sell 24-ounce energy drink cans for 3 dollars. Although not yet widely distributed, all three Juiced varieties do exist in 24-ounce cans, as shown on the Rockstar website (<http://www.rockstar69.com/products.html>).

If the Juiced line were to broaden its availability, it would be wise to offer price promotions with incentives, such as coupons, sent by mail, offered at point-of-purchase or available on the Rockstar website. These coupons would discount about 50 cents from the consumer's Juiced purchase or offer a free trial can. From my recollection, energy drinks have not offered coupons like this before so it would provide a unique opportunity for Rockstar to stand out, increase brand awareness, and motivate energy drinkers to try a new product.

Packaging

The Rockstar Juiced energy drink line is packaged in a can different from the other Rockstar products. Each Rockstar Juiced Flavor (original, guava and pomegranate) is packaged in a brightly colored can. The original orange, mango, and passion fruit combination is in an orange can, pomegranate is in a red can, and guava is in a purple can. All have the familiar Rockstar gold star logo on the front. Each Juiced can says Rockstar (in capital black letters), above Juiced (in capital gold letters), and below appears Energy + Juice (in smaller, capital white letters) on the original orange can. The only difference between the different Juiced flavors' packaging is the color of the can, the ingredients listed on the back, and that it has in capital white letters [Energy + Guava] or [Energy + Pomegranate] instead of [Energy + Juiced].

All three different flavored Juiced cans show the "Party Like a Rockstar" Rockstar brand slogan in large gold letters on the side of the can. Below the Rockstar slogan is a short paragraph that claims it to be "Bigger. Better. Faster. Stronger." After that first sentence, the paragraphs differ on each Juiced can by providing a brief description of the fruit flavor. Another consistency is the way that all three cans announce the 50% juice /100% energy claim on the bottom front of the cans and display the ingredients on the back in white letters on a black background with gold lines in between the ingredients listed. The Rockstar energy drink product line always displays its ingredients on a detailed list on the back of the can. This is an advantage against competitors (such as Red Bull) that only list the ingredients but not how much of each ingredient is contained. By comparison, Rockstar energy drink ingredients show they have nothing to hide exemplified by how they prominently display what their products contain.

The fact that the Rockstar brand should be almost immediately recognizable to energy drinkers increases the chances that Juiced will get noticed. The bright colors of the Juiced packaging and its flashy design is another benefit that will help this brand differentiate itself from others. Once the can is noticed, it also leads consumers to see that the product contains 50 percent juice, which is probably Juiced's key point of difference.

Product

What people are essentially getting out of an energy drink purchase is a can containing liquid ingredients that claim to provide energy. The particular product is the Rockstar Juiced line. Juiced are energy drink-juice hybrids containing 50 percent juice content to support their 50% juice/100% energy claim on the cans. "Energy drink connoisseurs will notice that Red Bulls, Rockstars and others tend to share the same core ingredients: taurine, carnatine, ginseng, guarana, random B vitamins, and, of course, caffeine" (Dahl, 2006). The Rockstar product line may have an advantage in terms of the energy provided and quality of its ingredients, which is the reason why people buy this product in the first place. "The product features guarana for its caffeine boost and milk thistle, which is reputed to assist in liver repairs. These, plus the fact the company only incorporates top-of-the-line ingredients, is what Weiner feels sets his energy drink's sustained energy apart from other brands" (Furhman, 2005). The Juiced brand has the benefit of particularly standing out by emphasizing that its ingredients consist of 50 percent juice content.

Historical Promotion

Since its advent, Rockstar Incorporated has handled its own marketing. Typically, Rockstar has used non-traditional marketing tactics and avoided the more mainstream television and print advertising. In 2005, "Rockstar began expanding from its grassroots/guerilla marketing methods into a billboard campaign in 18 markets, says Jason May, executive vice president of marketing. Rockstar also has promotional teams in most cities now" (Furhman, 2005). Promotional teams giving away energy drinks at events and campuses have proven to be popular methods of marketing and creating brand awareness for energy drinks employed by Rockstar and competitors such as Red Bull and Monster.

Other tactics used by Rockstar have included sponsorships such as supporting cars in the Indy Racing League. "Additionally, Rockstar sponsors ultimate fighters, one which is Randy Couture, and vehicle fabricator Jesse Rooke, who is known for his custom motorcycles" (Fuhrman, 2005). Between September and November 2007, Rockstar also sponsored the "Rockstar 'Viva La Bands' 2007 Tour. This tour paired the Rockstar brand with the film star of the MTV show "Viva La Bam", Bam Margera. Margera says that "The Rockstar Energy Drink guys totally get what I wanted 'Viva La Bands' to be all about. They are great supporters of rock music and understand that this is supposed to be more than just another concert experience" (PR Newswire, 2007). The tour stopped at 30 cities in the United States and Canada. The concert consisted of several rock bands performing and a traveling video show displaying over an hour of unseen footage from the "Viva La Bam" show.

Based on Rockstar's historical promotions, it is apparent that their target market has focused on males, who they consider are the primary consumers of their energy drink products. There is also a tendency for Rockstar Incorporated to support rock music correlating 'rock' with the brand name. Rock is also assumed to be the favorite music genre of the majority of the target consumers. Although it is important that they keep the male target market that they already have acquired, it would be wise for Rockstar to broaden its consumer base with the Juiced product line. This could be done with advertising and promotions aimed at a more general market, such as college students, that would help Juiced stand out among competitors and build brand awareness.

Analysis of Rockstar Brand's Total Marketing Situation

Environment

"Energy drinks are the dotcoms of the beverage business. Popularized by an Austrian gentleman named Dietrich Mateschitz, who founded the Red Bull company in 1984, energy drinks have grown into a multi-billion dollar market worldwide" (Neil, 2005). Red Bull was introduced into the United States in 1997 and can be considered the energy drink innovator. After Red Bull's success, the energy drink category sprouted and increased in popularity at a surprisingly rapid rate. According to Settineri (2007), energy drinks are one of the fastest-growing categories with sales up 49% since 2006.

There is controversy regarding how energy drinks affect health. "Nutritionist Richard DeAndrea thinks their addictive quality is the real reason for energy drinks' rapid growth in popularity" (Dahl, 2006). Other nutritionists also warn against drinking too much of them. "Marketing and advertising regulations in the children's food and drink market are likely to become even stricter over the next five years" (Lewis, 2007). Energy drink companies should start to appeal both to the end consumers (those who consume the product) as well as the gatekeepers (the parents or guardians who make the majority of the food and drink purchases for the end consumer). "In general, consumers are seeking better health, and a more personalized nutrition program to meet their individual health concerns and lifestyle requirements. Across the food and drink industry, products with added health benefits (or functional products) are proving popular" (Lewis, 2007). These developments are a primary reason Rockstar Juiced should differentiate itself by focusing on its healthier benefits.

Customers

The initial target market for energy drinks was young males. Currently, the energy drink market is expanding to include all demographics. "Marketers have thoughtfully positioned their beverages in the marketplace, creating an energy drink for every young lifestyle. Many, linked to extreme sports, represent adventure and rebellion. Others seem to offer a party image. Some niche brands have aligned themselves with personal interests, such as music and spirituality" (Business Wire, 2005). Based on past marketing tactics, it is evident that Rockstar has tried to position the brand towards rebellious young males who enjoy listening to rock music. Instead of aiming towards a niche market, it may better instead for Rockstar to start gaining a wider appeal by targeting a broader market

with their new Juiced line. The target would still be young but perhaps new marketing and advertising tactics could be relevant to both females and males.

Competition

Currently, Juiced is not the only energy drink-juice hybrid. In fact, “the newest niche on the market is energy drinks that appeal to the healthy-minded consumer...In addition to the full-fledged energy drinks, popular brands are also appealing to the healthy minded but in-need-of-a-boost consumer by adding juice” (Dahl, 2006). Examples of other energy drinks containing juice that are direct competitors to Juiced include Blue Sky Juiced, Fuze Vitalize, Monster Khaos, and Kronik Entourage.

Although Juiced contains juice that Red Bull does not have, Red Bull is still “the market leading energy brand in the grocery channel, with a value share of 43%. It continues to grow at 64%, which also makes it the fastest growing energy drink brand” (Settineri, 2007). Not only is Red Bull considered the energy drink product innovator, but it advertises and promotes itself more than any other energy drink brand. Therefore it has obtained the most brand visibility, equity, and recognition out of the energy drink market category.

“Today the \$3.5 billion energy-beverage market is 6 percent of the nonalcoholic beverage industry, which includes soft drinks. That’s up 75 percent since last year and is expected to top \$10 billion by 2010” (Ellis, 2006). Due to their success and increasing popularity, the energy drink landscape is becoming increasingly more competitive. In 2006 alone, 130 new energy drinks were launched (Zegler, 2006). Standing out amongst already established and emerging energy drink brands will be a challenge for Juiced. There is also more indirect competition for Rockstar energy drinks from other non-alcoholic beverages, such as sodas, bottled water, and juice.

Internal Factors

Strengths

Rockstar Incorporated was the pioneer of 16-ounce energy drink cans for the same two dollar price as half-the-size, eight-ounce Red Bull. Rockstar energy drinks also come in 24-ounce cans for about a dollar more. Some consumers may feel they are getting more for their money with Juiced quantities.

A huge strength for Juiced is that it is one of the few energy drinks to provide juice content. This could be utilized as its unique point of difference with ads that emphasize Juiced as being a healthier alternative compared to other energy drink competitors. Since Rockstar Incorporated has a distribution deal with Coca-Cola, they can also ensure availability of Juiced in many places.

Weaknesses

The primary disadvantages for Juiced is its lack of widespread distribution and brand awareness. A huge weakness is that Rockstar Juiced comes in three flavors but the one most commonly found in stores is the original orange, mango, and passion fruit combination. It also only makes this one Juiced flavor available in four-packs. The company should make an effort in terms of distribution to ensure all three flavors are available at more stores and perhaps offer all three varieties in four-packs.

In addition, the Rockstar website shows that all three Juiced varieties exist in 24-ounce cans, but rarely, if ever, do you see these at stores. That is another aspect of distribution that needs to be improved upon. Expanding distribution alone will help Juiced’s other weakness by increasing its visibility and, therefore, contributing to building its brand awareness.

External Factors

Threats

Energy drinks are perceived by critics to be unhealthy. This is a weakness for the overall energy drink market. Another threat is that emerging new energy drink brands are causing more competition

for Rockstar Juiced. This indicates that now more than ever Rockstar Incorporated needs to help its products stand out and differentiate themselves from other competitors.

Opportunities

“The popularity of energy drinks is ever-increasing, as people allow for less free time and have more disposable income” (Settinieri, 2007). The tremendous growth of the energy drink category “has been driven by the right product meeting the right group in the right place. Young people seek a way to get the most out of their free time and fun time; added energy is a solution” (Business Wire, 2007). Building strong energy drink brands will become more important as companies attempt to change the associated negative health perceptions. By positioning itself as healthier than the rest, Juiced can gain popularity and begin to change some negative energy drink perceptions by emphasizing the health benefits provided in its ingredients while still providing consumers with the energy they need.

Trends

The energy drink market “is likely to show some changes in the near future, including consolidation of some of the 1,000-plus players, both large and niche. To survive, manufacturers will need to develop strong and unique positions in the marketplace, as well as hearty distribution networks” (Business Wire, 2005). Juiced already has the advantage of the Coca-Cola distribution agreement so what needs the most improvement is developing brand awareness.

“The impact of trends, such as health and convenience, varies depending on how familiar consumers are with energy and sport drink brands and marketing” (Lewis, 2007). By building the Rockstar Juiced brand to be perceived as an energy drink that works and consumers can trust, they will be less inclined to be swayed by health news claiming all energy drinks are unhealthy. The ideal situation would be that consumers consider Juiced to be a healthier alternative that provides you with a more natural energy boost without the damaging health effects that other energy drinks may have.

“As the original consumers of pioneer energy drink brands, such as Red Bull, get older, the market is adapting to appeal to consumers in their 30s, 40s, and 50s” (Lewis 2007). Energy drinks are a new-generation phenomenon but as the age group who first embraced these products gets older, marketing tactics should change to include this initial key demographic. “Over the next five years, consumers will seek functional drinks that meet their specific needs/requirements (age, gender, occupation, and lifestyle). For example, teenagers will have quite different energy requirements from middle-aged adults and senior consumers” (Lewis, 2007). This explains why such a variety of new energy drink competitors are emerging that target groups such as women or certain ethnicities.

Consumer Relationships with Rockstar Juiced

Rockstar Juiced currently offers consumers three flavors, 16- or 24- ounce can sizes, and juice content that is combined with the energy component. Lack of distribution and brand awareness are Juiced’s major weaknesses. Energy drinkers may not consume Juiced simply because they do not know the product exists. Once the Juiced line distribution widens, it will have the advantage of offering three different varieties (original, guava, and pomegranate) for consumers to choose from. Rockstar Juiced also offers consumers a healthier alternative compared to other energy drink competitors because of its 50 percent juice content and other vitamin ingredients.

Presently, there seems to be a lack of brand loyalty for energy drink brands except for Red Bull. If Juiced increases its brand visibility and awareness, it offers the potential of forming a bond with its target consumers. Brand loyalty will result in increased sales and provide valuable positive word-of-mouth among energy drinkers.

Realistic Role for Advertising

Red Bull is the leading energy drink competitor that has also implemented the most marketing dollars to gain exposure and build awareness for the brand. They are best known for their television “Red Bull gives you wings” ad campaign, which is supplemented by other promotional materials and marketing tactics. Not so coincidentally, Red Bull is also the energy drink with the most sales, brand awareness, and loyalty among its target consumers.

With a product like energy drinks where brands are a huge deciding factor, advertising can play a key role in differentiating Rockstar Juiced from its competition. Just by advertising alone, Juiced has the opportunity to stand out because not many energy drink brands other than Red Bull have executed television and print commercials for the general public. The Juiced ads will be especially effective if they can connect with the target audience and be relevant to their active, energy-seeking lifestyles. “When you’re not the inventor of a category, the way to stand out from the competition is to be an innovator in the category” (Fuhrman, 2006). If the product highlights the juice content in its ads, it will provide a unique and memorable point of difference from the competition. It will also establish Juiced as a being part of the Rockstar brand umbrella but distinguish it as being its own separate entity.

Advertising Objectives and Strategy

After exploring Juiced’s current marketing mix and overall marketing situation, it is evident that advertising can play a key role in differentiating this product from its energy drink competition. Some suggested objectives and strategies that should be incorporated into Juiced advertising are as follows:

- To generate brand awareness of Rockstar Juiced among the energy drink category by developing a new television ad campaign supplemented with other marketing tactics including print, interactive, and non-traditional methods.
- To position Juiced as a being a more desirable, healthier alternative to other energy drinks because of its juice content and other healthy vitamin ingredients by demonstrating in ads how this product will provide consumers with a more natural energy boost in their everyday lives.
- To make Juiced’s key point of difference that it contains 50 percent juice content known by highlighting this advantage in all marketing communication efforts.
- To stimulate trial of Rockstar Juiced among energy drinkers by providing price promotion coupons and supporting guerilla marketing that distribute samples at events and sponsorships where the target audience frequents.
- To establish Rockstar Juiced as being part of the Rockstar brand product line but make Juiced its own separate entity by emphasizing this in all ads and supplemental marketing tactics.

CONSUMER INSIGHTS

To explore perceptions about energy drinks and specifically Rockstar Juiced, interviews and other insight-generating activities were conducted among the energy drink target audience consisting of 19 to 22 year old college (male and female) students. The interview questions were determined by the objectives our group wanted to explore regarding the competition, why consumers drink energy drinks, situational consumption, factors that influence their decision to buy energy drinks, why people prefer or don’t prefer Rockstar Juiced as their energy drink of choice, and to determine who the target consumers are for Rockstar Juiced in comparison to the competition.

In the initial interviews, some energy drink brand competitors mentioned include Monster, Full Throttle, Tab, Mountain Dew Amp, Redline, and Lost. The most well-known competitor was Red Bull, which most interviewees identified as being their favorite brand. They prefer Red Bull because of its smaller can, distinct taste, and effectiveness in providing energy. More males than females seemed to be regular energy drinkers and some of these males displayed brand loyalty to their favorite energy drinks.

The top reasons the interviewees provided for why they consume energy drinks are to receive the benefits of gaining energy, to keep you awake in order to accomplish your goals, and because the taste is more refreshing than coffee. Factors that influenced these consumers when purchasing energy drinks include the taste, price, and size of can. The typical situational consumption for energy drinks is for social situations, school, work, long road trips, gym, exercise, or as a coffee replacement. When Rockstar Juiced was sampled by interviewees, the females tended to find it tasted too sweet while the males considered it was a better tasting alternative to other energy drinks. Based on these interviews, we considered that the Juiced target audience may consist more of younger males (18 to 35 years old) who lead active and busy lifestyles. Because of their age range and tendency to have disposable income, the target audience also tends to be college students or full-time employees.

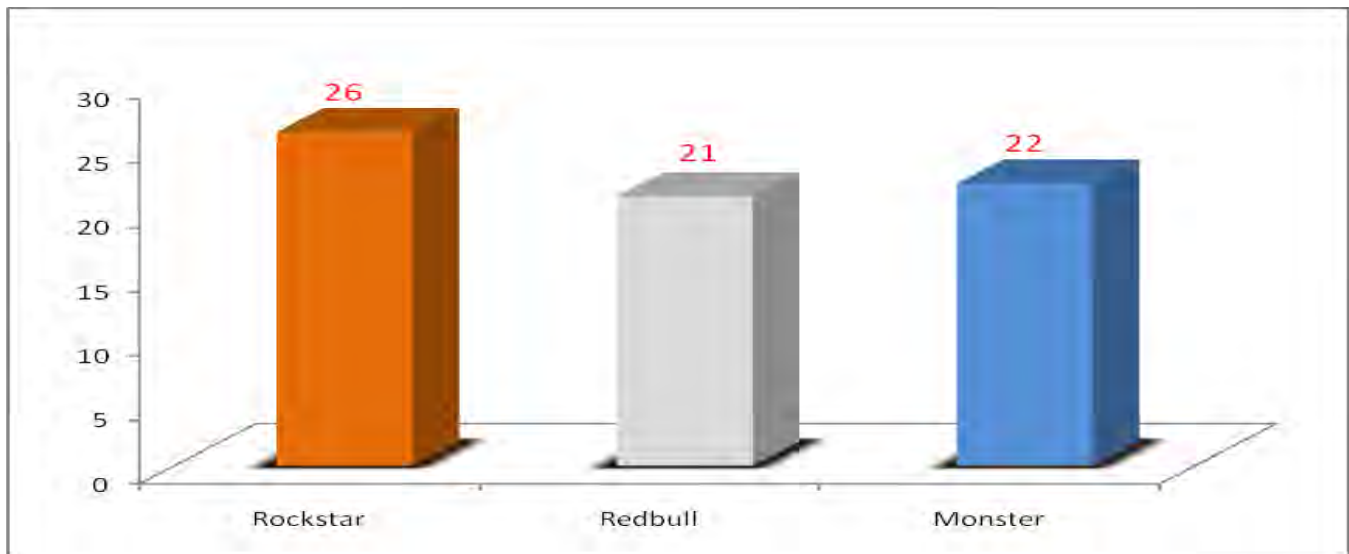
After our first round of interviews, other insight-generating activities conducted include sentence completion and blind taste tests. For these activities, we again chose young male and female college students in the 19 to 22 age range. With the sentence completion activities, the participants were asked to fill in questions on separate sheets of paper such as “If Rockstar Juiced were a ... (animal, genre of music, celebrity, song), it would be like...” Because of the original-flavored Juiced can being orange with a black font, the animals used to describe it were a tiger and a jaguar. There was a unanimous correlation between the participant answers that Rockstar Juiced reminds them of rock music and of the musician Kid Rock. *An insight derived is that there is a connection between rock music and the Rockstar brand.* Other celebrities mentioned include Dennis Rodman, Carmen Electra, and the Rock. *Based on these responses, another insight is that Rockstar may remind consumers of ‘living on the edge’ and being rebellious.*

The same sentence completion questions were asked about the Red Bull brand, which was considered Rockstar’s chief competitor. Almost every celebrity revealed that reminded participants of Red Bull were hip-hop or rap artists. All respondents also agreed that the Red Bull brand reminded them of the hip-hop/rap music genres; one male also mentioned that it reminded him of trance music. *An insight about the chief competitor, Red Bull, is that it reminds people more of rap/hip-hop probably since it has gained prominence being sold at clubs that play this music. In contrast, Rockstar reminds consumers more of rock music, perhaps because of the ‘rock’ part of the term.* This concept creates a consistency with Rockstar’s past promotions, which have connected its brand with rock music concerts, such as “Viva La Bands”.

Additional sentence completion activities were conducted with 20 students at Strozier Library. Among 20 respondents, 25 percent had never tried energy drinks before. The participants that had previously consumed energy drinks also named the Red Bull brand most often, which again signifies that this is the main competitor. *The Strozier respondents who had drank Rockstar or heard of the brand correlated it with partying all night long.* Some people were familiar with the “Party like a Rockstar” slogan, implying that it may have some impact on consumers who know it.

Many of the respondents perceived energy drinks to be unhealthy and mentioned the ‘crash factor’, which is that they can help you gain energy for a short period but afterwards make you feel more tired. *This opens a door for Rockstar Juiced if it differentiates itself as a healthier alternative compared to other energy drinks because it contains 50 percent juice and will therefore provide a more natural energy boost.* The majority of respondents said they consume energy drinks when they are tired but still need to continue working, studying, or need energy to exercise. *This provides an opportunity for Juiced ad campaigns that can focus on what it can provide to the drinkers in its ads, such as strength, energy, or feelings of power and success.* This will attract consumers who lead a busy life and want to be successful. It will also serve as an important touch/connection point between the Rockstar Juiced brand and consumers.

The blind taste test recruited 11 non-energy drinkers at the Leach center. Every respondent tried Monster, Red Bull, and Rockstar, without knowing which was which. Consumers were asked to rate the energy drinks three points if it was their favorite-tasting, two points for the one they liked second best and one point for their least favorite. Results are displayed on the chart below and show that *people trying energy drinks for the first time tend to like the taste of Rockstar best. The implication for Rockstar is that it may be able to capture non-users’ attention if it does free sample marketing.*



CREATIVE BRIEF

Why are we advertising?

Rockstar Juiced is making it a priority to get itself known as a brand. If people are not aware that this energy drink exists, the odds of them purchasing the product are decreased. The Juiced ads should be relevant to the product and Rockstar brand as well as memorable enough to establish brand awareness.

What is the advertising trying to achieve?

The primary goal of Juiced advertising will be to build brand awareness and differentiate this product from other energy drink competitors because of its 50 percent juice content. It will also mention that Juiced is available in three flavors (original, pomegranate, and guava) and in 16- and 24-ounce cans. Ads will acknowledge that Juiced is made by Rockstar Incorporated, which is already a recognized brand.

What's the opportunity for advertising?

Rockstar Incorporated is an established brand that was the pioneer in selling 16-ounce energy drinks for the same two dollar price as an eight-ounce Red Bull. The particular product line, Rockstar Juiced, is one of the few energy drinks containing juice content. In addition to providing the power to get drinkers through their day, Juiced gives energy-seekers a healthy alternative. This will help Juiced drinkers feel good about their consumption choices. The emphasis is on positioning the Rockstar Juiced brand in a way that reminds consumers of a healthy life while providing an energy boost.

While the brand's competitors, such as Red Bull, Monster and Full Throttle, take consumers into the world of popular parties and rap music, Rockstar will be marketed towards more health-conscious consumers. Juiced is not a drink that will merely get you through your day but *it is a drink that will make your day*. So, for those ready to feel a different kind of energy, our opportunity is to get consumers to feel good about being bad.

To whom are we speaking?

Just as Red Bull has made their "Wings" ads appeal to the general public, Juiced advertising should entertain a broader audience other than just young males. Although young males ages 18 to 35 will stay as the primary target, the advertising will interest both sexes in trying Juiced. It will not target males solely to the point that females feel discouraged to try Rockstar Juiced if they saw it at the store.

What do we know about our target demographic?

The mostly male audience that Juiced will target can be classified as 'life enthusiasts', ages 18 to 35. They do not lead sheltered, quiet lives but rather embrace life to the max. They're health-conscious, exercise often, and are constantly trying to stay on top by looking their best. They tend to live active, busy lifestyles that constantly keep them on-the-go. Most of these consumers are in college or working at their first full-time job. This market will be prone to try and embrace a new energy drink like Rockstar Juiced because they're constantly seeking new experiences and love to test the limits of life.

What is the main idea we need to communicate?

Rockstar Juiced is "the healthier alternative to other energy drinks". It enables you to obtain a more natural energy boost from the 50 percent juice and other healthy vitamins it contains.

What is the best way of planting this idea?

The creative executions may approach the main idea by emphasizing that Rockstar Juiced contains 50 percent juice and perhaps mention some other key vitamin ingredients that combined provide energy drinkers with a more natural energy boost that will last them throughout the day. It will also be good to mention that Juiced comes in three flavors and avoids giving you a 'crash factor' after it wears off.

CREATIVE IDEAS AND FURTHER INSIGHTS

Objectives

To determine if we were on the right track with our Juiced target audience and potential ideas for advertising, we conducted a class focus group which helped us explore further insights and probe on the following objectives and topics:

1. **Lifestyle**- Identify the lifestyle of an energy drink consumer including their leisure time activities, preferences, and media consumption habits.
2. **Taste/Flavor**- Determine perceptions consumers have about juice, fruit, soda, and juice flavored beverages.
3. **Health/Energy**- To learn the relationships between energy drinks and health; also to determine perceptions in regards to the use of caffeine.
4. **Rebellion**- To learn perceptions about what the target considers rebellious nature and the feeling that rebellion creates.
5. **Packaging/Brand Perceptions**- Have participants look over package design of Rockstar Juiced, Red Bull, Monster Khaos, and Full Throttle, and share opinions about different energy drinks.
6. **Ad Concept Test**- To learn perceptions about energy drinks and see how respondents react to proposed new message strategies.

Methodology

One focus group session was conducted on November 19, 2007 in Tallahassee, Florida in the Account Planning classroom at Florida State University. The group was comprised of eight male college students, ages 19 to 23, and lasted about 100 minutes. Students were previously screened before the focus group to eliminate any participants who are against drinking energy drinks and to ensure that they would classify as part of our target energy drink consumer audience.

Findings

1. Lifestyle/Media Profile

In the beginning of our focus group, it was important to get a general idea of the target audience's interests to determine what would appeal to them in ads and what media is most likely to reach them. Over half of the participants mentioned their favorite music genre is rock, which supports

the brand's current position advocating and representing this type of music. One guy said he likes rock music because it keeps him upbeat. *A good idea could be to correlate rock music to something else that keeps people upbeat, Rockstar Juiced.* The media that they use on a daily basis includes TV, internet, cell phone, internet on their cell phone, and social networking websites, such as Facebook and Myspace. *There was a particular emphasis on using Facebook, which could provide a non-traditional media outlet that Juiced could use to advertise to this target market.* Some magazines that the male participants read include Men's Health, Men's Fitness, and GQ. These could be options of where to place Juiced print ads.

2. Taste/Flavor

We started off the second objective by inquiring about the participants' morning routines to determine where Juiced would fit into their schedule and see what times of day they would be most prone to drink it. The key information I obtained from this conversation was that a few of the males mentioned they usually check Facebook in the mornings. This reinforces my previously mentioned idea about advertising on Facebook, which would probably reach a great majority of the target audience.

In the discussion about fruits, most agreed that they tend to eat more fruit back at home while living with their parents. Fruits are usually eaten as a snack or in between meals. When deciding between their preference of fruit or juice, some said fruit because they felt juice sometimes does not have as much fruit content. Compared to real fruit, juice seems to be perceived as being more artificial or synthetic. A concern with juice is that you do not know what has been added to it, while fruits are perceived as being more natural. Negative aspects mentioned about fruit are that they usually take more effort to eat and are not very filling. Advantages of juice were that it is easier to consume and you could have a variety of fruits in just one drink. One male participant likes juice because he doesn't like the texture of some fruits, such as the stringy things in oranges or the texture of grapes.

When deciding between their preference of drinking soda or juice, one respondent mentioned he likes the 'kick' that comes with soda. All the participants agreed that you can't compare juice with juice-flavored soda. Drinking juice makes the participants feel like they're doing something right by contributing to their health and it tastes more refreshing. A good point brought up is that vending machines barely sell juices so instead you usually buy soda. Although soda tastes good, you may regret drinking it because it is not nearly as healthy as juice. *An implication for Rockstar is to distribute Juiced to more vending machines on college campuses because the target audience will be more likely to try an energy drink-juice hybrid liked Juiced over soda, especially if it is marketed as being healthier with its 50 percent juice content.*

Bringing up the topic of energy drinks with juice content, some of the participants were not even aware that these products existed, which *reinforces the notion that there is a lack of brand awareness for Rockstar Juiced.* One participant said that *drinking caffeinated soda makes him crash while juice gives him more of a natural rather than artificial energy that carries him throughout the day. The natural energy boost provided by Juiced's juice content and vitamin ingredients is something that should be emphasized in ads.*

Towards the beginning of our focus group, a blind taste test was conducted of Rockstar Juiced sampled along with Monster Khaos (another energy drink/juice hybrid with 70 percent juice content), Fanta Orange and Strawberry soda. All the participants agreed that although none of the beverages sampled during the trial tasted like 100 percent juice, Monster Khaos and Rockstar Juiced were the favorites sampled in the trial testing. Once we revealed and discussed which beverages were which, we discussed the energy drink-juice hybrids compared to other non-alcoholic beverages, like soda or juice. Energy drinks were said to have more flavor and pop to them than regular soda or juice. The different brands of energy drinks were also mentioned to each have their own distinct taste.

3. Health/Energy

After the blind taste test, we switched to probing on opinions about health and led to the topic of energy. Focus group opinions about what constitutes a healthy lifestyle included being active, getting adequate amounts of sleep, and watching what you eat. Also, one participant said that limiting how

much fast food and energy drinks you intake helps him feel healthier. Another key point mentioned by a participant is that *it is important to maintain a balance between your physical (eating healthy, being active and exercising) and mental health (having fun, hanging out with friends, getting sleep).*

A valid point during the focus group is how *it is more expensive to eat healthy when you are on your own in college.* Another participant agreed and adds it is unfortunate that “You often don’t have the money to eat as healthy as you’d like to.” In college, it is especially difficult to eat healthy with the temptations of there being so many fast food options. It is also hard to eat healthy due to time and money constraints or not knowing how to cook.

When we switched to the topic of confidence, one respondent noted that “*You feel confident when you feel healthy and look good.*” Another notion is that having confidence helps them meet girls because “It’s nice to have the feeling of being happy with whom you are.” *One participant said when he feels confident he is not as afraid to do something stupid or tell more jokes because he has fewer second thoughts about taking risks and feels less inhibited. Having confidence provides you with the incentive to achieve better for yourself.* In contrast, not having confidence was said to decrease your ability to do well in school and affect you negatively in other aspects of your life.

An insight of what makes this target audience feel more confident is listening to upbeat music. Perhaps Rockstar could incorporate upbeat rock music into its future ads and website. Instances where music increases confidence mentioned by participants were dancing alone at home without roommates around or singing in the shower. *Another key insight mentioned by one participant is how he feels more confident after accomplishing a feat, such as making it on a bike over a huge hill. He elaborated saying that “Right now, none of us are the men we want to eventually become, but we are taking steps in that journey.” Describing life as a journey and incorporating Juiced as the fuel that will accompany you and help you keep going is an interesting concept.*

When we began discussing energy drinks, their crash factor was one of the first issues to be brought up. A perception is that if you consume a lot of sugar at once, as are in energy drinks, there will be a crash effect on your body afterwards. Some participants felt that energy drinks do not affect them or make them feel able to do something they were not able to do before drinking it.

Another participant brings up the point that energy drinks have individualistic results. He shares a story about how he once drank 19 Red Bulls, but that they stopped affecting him after a certain point. He explained that “Once you get to a particular energy level you stay at whatever level it puts you on.” Another notion with energy drinks is that they make you feel like your body is moving while your brain is tired. A participant says he acts goofy when he’s on energy drinks; sometimes he gets too shaky and doesn’t know what to do with himself, while other times one energy drink will help him. He also brings up that *when energy drinks advertise with sports, they should not be paired together because they do not tie in with sports images since sports are perceived as being healthy and energy drinks are not.* He suggests that energy drinks should instead be portrayed with people partying or staying up very late the night before.

Overall it was confirmed that about half the participants did have negative perceptions of energy drinks regarding how they affect health. One participant considers that “energy drinks are a necessary evil for a temporary amount of time.” He does not think that they should become part of your daily routine but it is occasionally acceptable to consume one, like if you need to stay up studying for an exam.

Some participants said they consume energy drinks with alcohol, such as with Jager bombs, consisting of Red Bull and Jagermeister liquor. One reason for combining an energy drink with alcohol is to mix a stimulant with a depressant to help keep you awake in social late-night situations at places such as parties, bars or clubs. Also energy drinks are consumed with alcohol because “it tastes better than drinking straight liquor.” *An implication is that since juice is often used as mixer with alcohol, promotions in liquor stores could cross-sell Juiced with flavored vodka brands and this would increase Juiced sales.* Although Rockstar Incorporated would not advocate that drinking alcohol is healthy and is prohibited to minors, using Juiced as a mixer could be positioned as ‘being a healthier alternative than other mixers’. This would imply that Juiced distribution would need to extend itself to liquor store chains.

4. Rebellion

Since the Rockstar image has previously been correlated with rebelliousness, we wanted to determine if this connection was actually relevant to the target audience. Generally, the participants regarded rebellion as being positive if it creates 'good with evil'. One participant elaborated that "If people do the right thing to be rebellious it can be appropriate, but sometimes it's annoying if they are rebels just to stand out and get attention". To another participant rebellion is going against the norm; whatever mainstream society is doing, rebels do the opposite.

Rebellion was compared to being like a member of the rock band Rage of the Machine. Another rebellious character mentioned by a few participants was musician Marilyn Manson. Manson went to a Catholic school but drastically transformed afterwards when he became a rocker. Manson then began to do whatever he wanted without caring what people thought. *A valuable insight mentioned is that when you are young, it is cooler to rebel so that 'you're actually trying to fit in by virtue of being rebellious.'* A supporting example is how a participant felt rebellious when he protested the inauguration of President Bush; yet he felt right about what he was doing because he firmly believed Bush was a bad president and person.

5. Packaging/Brand Perceptions

An activity conducted with our focus group was showing them unopened cans of four different energy drink brands (Rockstar Juiced, Red Bull, Monster Khaos, and Full Throttle Demon) in order to gain perceptions about the brands and their packaging. Red Bull was perceived as being the most classic. The blue colors on the packaging were appealing to the participants. One male said that he would pick an energy drink based on the packaging colors he likes best so having attractive colors give Red Bull an advantage. Another respondent said that *because Red Bull was the original energy drink it automatically has preference over other energy drinks (comparison to Coke being considered classic).*

One male thought the Monster packaging looks like the ingredients inside will kill him; he prefers more of a classic look like Red Bull. This participant mentioned that *the visual appeal of the packaging is a very important element*. If it looks like it's going to kill you (like Monster) then he will not want to try it. *The Rockstar Juiced packaging was considered by some of the participants to be tacky. Being a female energy drinker myself, this leads me to believe that the Juiced packaging may be more appealing to females.* To further confirm my previous insight, two participants considered that the Rockstar brand sounds fruity and reminds them of a drunk, stupid girl. In regards to Juiced's 50 percent juice content, a few participants were concerned about what ingredients and contents are in the other non-juice 50 percent.

The group was torn between whether they liked the 16-ounce or 8-ounce Red Bull can better. Some felt that bigger energy drink containers will give you energy that lasts longer and you are getting more for your money's worth. Others preferred the smaller Red Bull size, which they consider provided as much energy as the bigger can.

6. Reactions to Advertising Concepts

Participants were introduced to advertising concepts based on three different attributes (taste, energy and health). They were initially asked to rank these attributes in order of importance. A variety of answers were produced. One participant ranked taste first because "If you don't like the way it tastes, automatically you're not going to want to drink it." Another respondent agreed on taste being the priority because he didn't feel energy drinks give him energy and he does not care about his health. One male ranked health as the least priority because the whole point is to get energy and energy drinks may not necessarily be good for you (reinforces a negative energy drink perception). For another male energy was his first priority because he said that is the purpose of drinking and purchasing these products.

1st Concept- Focus on Energy, "The Sleepy Juiceman"

One participant liked this concept because a lot of products taste good but if it can also really give you energy then that would be a good aspect to focus on. Overall the idea would not sell these target

audience group members. Some of the focus group did not like the ridiculousness of it. The ad was observed to be a mix of crazy clumsiness with weirdness (reminded one male of Orbit ads).

2nd Concept- Focus on Taste, "Juiceman to the Rescue"

Focusing on the taste aspect appealed the most to one participant. In general, to sell just based on taste may be difficult. A criticism is that this ad seemed targeted too much towards a 5-year old age group.

3rd Concept- Focus on Health, "Juiceman in Lab Coat"

This concept evoked the most preference from the participants. One participant thinks that this concept stands out because "you obviously want energy in an energy drink, but if you could also be drinking something healthy it would be a plus". They considered it to be unique in the aspect that an energy drink focuses on health. *In today's society, health is important because many of us want to look like celebrities so if you put forth the idea that this is a healthy drink compared to others it will give Juiced an advantage.*

Additionally, by positioning Juiced as an innovator within the energy drink category, it will be enticing to try.

Ad Concept Suggestions

A good suggestion provided by the focus group participants is that *if ads make claims based on scientific evidence it will make them seem more credible, especially regarding the concept based on health.* One participant suggested a grandma or mother (basically a wiser, older authority figure) being in ads to promote the healthy aspect of Rockstar Juiced. With the third ad concept focusing on health, another participant suggested showing a healthy guy in a healthy environment with bright colors.

To make ads more relevant to people, a participant recommended using real people in ads rather than using unrealistic cartoons. He gave the example of 5-hour energy which uses real people in its ads and tempted him to try this product the next day. Another idea he provided was ads could show people drinking different energy drinks and demonstrate scientifically that Juiced really works compared to others.

Key Insights

The day doesn't seem to have enough hours so something has to give and usually people sacrifice sleep, which is where energy drinks come into play. If you need that extra boost, energy drinks probably fit in best between lunch and dinner. They can also serve as a substitute for coffee and have the benefit of being more refreshing.

It was confirmed that energy drink-juice hybrids, such as Rockstar Juiced and Monster Khaos, have little to no brand awareness among these target audience respondents. In contrast, Red Bull has done memorable enough television advertising that several participants brought up the 'Wings' campaign. Among this focus group, Red Bull had a positive brand image and high awareness.

Most of the participants agreed on being short on time in the mornings so they usually skip eating breakfast. Juice is usually faster and considered more convenient to drink. Overall, juice carries a positive connotation. Some participants also disliked the texture of real fruit. *A positioning idea could be to replace fruit with juice and juice with Juiced. Containing juice content can position Juiced as being a healthier energy drink alternative.* Maybe Juiced could go with the direction of advertising that *consumers are getting a more natural energy boost from the juice content in this energy drink.*

It seems that choosing an energy drink brand can depend on the kind of energy that you need and why you are using it. *Juiced may be able to position itself like a companion during the times in college when you need boosts of energy.* Juiced can keep you energized and healthy while providing a more natural energy boost with its juice content. A good suggestion provided during the class debriefing is for Juiced packaging instead be in a clear container so that consumers can see the juice content that is inside.

The concept about how young males, such as the participants in our group, are becoming the men that they eventually want to be is a key insight found. Perhaps Juiced could be positioned as the fuel that takes you on

the road to what you are becoming. Juiced might be something that will help you go through the steps in life because you need fuel during some of these times.

Some additional thoughts discussed in the class debriefing are that there did not seem to be a strong enough connection between the Rockstar brand and rebellion to use it as the basis for Juiced ads. It was a good recommendation that one participant warned not to tie energy drinks with sports because the two do not correlate since one is perceived to be healthy (sports) while the other is not as healthy (energy drinks). *Music is important to this target audience and helps boost their confidence so it would be smart to advocate upbeat rock music with the Rockstar Juiced brand.*

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Energy drinks are a recently popularized category and the majority lack brand awareness and identity. Except for Red Bull, most energy drinks brands do not advertise at all or rely only on non-traditional guerilla marketing tactics. There is still ample opportunity for Juiced to differentiate itself by advertising through more traditional television and print media outlets. It would be ideal to establish Juiced as a separate entity from the Rockstar brand and push this product line more towards the juice category. When you think of the term Rockstar, you do not think of Juiced or juice. If Rockstar Juiced wants to stand out it should provide its healthy juice content as being its unique point of difference.

From the focus group discussion of ad concepts, health seemed to be the attribute that will most distinguish Rockstar Juiced from its competitors. “Teenagers will be targeted with natural ingredients that appeal to their lifestyle as they grow independent from their families and purchase more products by themselves and on impulse for immediate consumption” (Lewis, 2007). Advertising will play a key role in creating brand awareness for Juiced and emphasizing that it is a healthier alternative to other energy drinks because of its 50 percent juice content and other healthy vitamin ingredients. All Rockstar Juiced marketing communication will reinforce and highlight this main benefit.

The Rockstar Juiced ad campaign should follow the example of Red Bull by centering on its television commercials. It will support these TV commercials with print and interactive ads offering coupons that decrease the price of Juiced or offer a free trial can. An important aim for marketing communication needs to be getting energy drinkers to try Rockstar Juiced. Once they have tried Juiced, customers are likely to repurchase this product in the future if they liked it. Enticing the consumers to sample the product and establishing Juiced in their purchasing energy drink decision set should be more of a priority within the marketing mix. This goal will be further supported by sponsorships giving away Rockstar Juiced cans and price promotions offering coupons for free Juiced or 50 cents off a purchase. Juiced TV and print ads should be a motivating factor and brand reminder to the interested target market to try Juiced the next time they see it at the store or at the gas station.

Non-traditional advertising methods should also be employed to provide additional brand reminders, such as out-door billboards, point-of-purchase displays in grocery stores and especially in gas stations, which is where half of all energy drinks were purchased in 2004. Another important aspect will be the guerilla marketing tactics distributing free samples to energy drinkers at college campuses, concerts, etc. The TV/print ad campaign along with other consumer touch points, such as on-can communications, point-of-sale merchandising, and accompanying Juiced literature, should emphasize that this product is a healthier energy drink option because of its vitamins and 50 percent juice content.

The newly-created energy drink category is showing no sign of slowing down anytime soon. Using the already established Rockstar brand name and Coca-Cola distribution network to its advantage, Rockstar Juiced has great potential to increase its brand awareness and sales with the help of advertising and complementing marketing tactics.

REFERENCES

- Business Newswire. (July 19, 2007). Rockstar Energy Drink and Bam Margera Present the 2007 'Viva La Bands' Tour. Retrieved December 1, 2007, from Abi/Inform database.
- Butterfield, Leslie. (2000). Developing Advertising Strategy. In Cooper, Alan. (Ed. 2). *How To Plan Advertising*. (p. 34). Thomson Learning 2006.
- Dahl, Melissa. (March 3, 2006). Jump Starters: Amid a Stimulating Debate, Caffeine Grabs a Niche With Youths. *Knight Ridder Tribune Business News*.. Retrieved Dec. 1, 2007, from Abi/Inform database.
- Ellis, Steven. (June 7, 2006). Energy Drinks Bubble Up. *The Christian Science Monitor*. Retrieved December 1, 2007, from Abi/Inform database.
- Fuhrman, Elizabeth. (June 2005). Partying Like a Rockstar: Rockstar Has a Reason to Party, With a Brand on Fire and a New Agreement With Coca-Cola. *Beverage Industry*. Retrieved December 1, 2007, from Abi/Inform database.
- Lewis, Helen. (June 2007). Global Market Review of Functional Energy Drinks and Sports Drinks- Forecasts to 2012: 2007 Edition: Market Drivers in Energy and Sports Drinks to 2012. *Just-Drinks*. Retrieved December 1, 2007, from Abi/Inform database.
- MacArthur, Kate. (May 9, 2005). High-Energy Rivalry. *Advertising Age*. (Midwest Region Edition). Retrieved December 1, 2007, from Abi/Inform database.
- Neil, Dan. (September 18, 2005). 800 Words: Lightning in a Can. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved December 1, 2007, from Abi/Inform database.
- PR Newswire. (April 28, 2005). Rockstar Inc. Announces Distribution Agreement with Coca-Cola North America and Coca-Cola Enterprises Signs Sub-Agreement To Distribute Rockstar, Expanding Its Energy Drink Portfolio. Retrieved December 1, 2007, from Abi/Inform database.
- PR Wire. (September 15, 2005). The \$1.1 Billion U.S. Energy Drink Market Has Experienced Phenomenal Growth of Over 700% in Current Terms Between 2000 and 2005. Retrieved December 1, 2007, from Abi/Inform database.
- Settineri, Hailey. (August 6-17, 2007). Invigorating the Beverage Category. *Retail World*. Retrieved December 1, 2007, from Abi/Inform database.
- Zegler, Jennifer. (November 2006). What's Your Niche? *Beverage Industry*. Retrieved December 1, 2007, from Abi/Inform database.