

Product claims must be credible

as consumers become more value conscious

Health and sustainability claims in a transparent manner are key in the soft drinks industry as a consequence of COVID-19, reports FMCG Gurus.



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Consumers are worried about the impact of COVID-19, both from a health and economic perspective.

This is having a significant impact on buying behaviour within the soft drinks sector, as consumers become less brand loyal and demonstrate a greater willingness to shop around in order to obtain the best value for money.

If soft drink brands are to maximise perceptions of value, they need to understand how consumer need states are evolving and what is being prioritised. This means ensuring that soft drinks are positioned as healthy and sustainable – and claims related to this deemed credible – if brands are to maintain loyalty and encourage trade-up.

Coronavirus concern

Across the globe, the impact of COVID-19 is wide ranging and something that consumers feel will be long-lasting. In April 2020, FMCG Gurus conducted a COVID-19 survey across 18 countries.

The research found that 76% of consumers across the globe say that they are concerned about coronavirus, with 48% saying they believe it will impact on day-to-day behaviour for at least twelve months.

Soft drinks brands more sensitive

Consumers are concerned about coronavirus for a variety of reasons. Whilst the two biggest concerns are the impact it could have on the health and wellbeing of themselves (84%) and loved ones (79%), 56% say that they are worried about the impact that COVID-19 will have on the economy.



This concern is also highlighted by the fact that 63% of consumers across the globe say they believe they will be heading for recession.

This is something that will have a significant impact on buying behavior within the soft drinks market. For instance, in April 2020, a total of 54% of consumers said that they had become less brand conscious when buying soft drinks in the past month.

This was a higher figure compared to other sectors such as food, alcoholic beverages, personal care and toiletries. This shows that the soft drinks sector is one where consumers are especially likely to be willing to shop around in order to try and get the best value for money.

Credible claims

As consumers become more value conscious, it is crucial that soft drink brands recognise what is important to consumers, and two priorities are health and sustainability. This is especially true given that consumers often deem these two issues to be interlinked.

As a result of COVID-19, 73% of consumers say that they plan to eat and drink healthier, whilst 55% say that they have become more concerned about the environment. This will drive demand for beverages that are deemed fresh, local and natural and are free from chemicals.

Additionally, soft drinks that carry claims around functional ingredients and health boosting claims will also appeal. When it comes to such claims it is crucial that they are deemed credible.

Alignment to needs and attitudes is key

It must be remembered that even in a recessionary environment, consumers will not opt for a product simply because it is the cheapest. Moreover, they will still be willing to trade-up to products that they feel best match their need states and attitudes and outlook on life.

This means it is more important than ever that soft drinks are deemed to be healthy and sustainable, and that related claims are deemed credible. ■

