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Final Thesis

**Beverage
Marketing
in Japan**

How marketing can affect
consumer's view about a
certain product

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Abstract

One of Japanese society's feature is its fast-paced daily life. It can be stressful for some people since the work shift is usually longer than nine-to-five, and sometimes there is little to no separation between work and private life. In this society which seems always moving and never stopping, how can a product grasp the attention of a consumer which has almost no time to do other than work and rest? What is the needed driver for a company to apply to its marketing strategy for a product to sell, and be perceived in the correct way by customers? This work aims at pointing out how a marketing strategy can be effective for the Japanese consumers.

By an analysis of how to create a marketing strategy and by the analysis of cases-study which represent some products created in Japan such as Pocari Sweat and its Ion Water, Yakult in its variation Yakult 1000 and the Asahi Super Dry Beer in the so-called "Nama Jokki Kan" are the examples of how a marketing campaign should be designed to be effective in the hearts and minds of Japanese customers. By choosing both soft drinks and alcoholic drinks, in this dissertation there will be a wider analysis of the marketing campaign of each product, that will give a better idea about how to effectively communicate the benefits and key features of a product which is widely known by Japanese customers.

Keywords: Marketing, marketing strategy, emotions, soft drinks, alcoholic drinks, communication, Japanese drinking culture.

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概要

日本の社会の特徴は生活が早すぎることである。通勤ラッシュの電車に乗って仕事へ行き、帰り道でも電車に乗ったり降りたりすることが、ずっと止まらず、毎日ループのように繰り返される。そうしたルーティンのなかに、仕事が終わった後、同僚と一緒に飲みに行くことがある。部長などがみんなを誘うことは、日本の会社ではよく起こるイベントである。名付けて「飲み会」と言う。このようなイベントが苦手なものになる可能性はある。なぜなら、いつもお酒が飲むことは問題があるかもしれない。終電に乗れなかったり翌日のパフォーマンスが低いこともあるだろうし、お酒が弱い人も参加するのでこの人々は安全に帰宅できるのだろうか。または部長や同僚と話すことは社員を緊張させる時もあるだろう。新型コロナウイルスが始まった頃から、隔離生活をしている人々は家でお酒を飲むようになった。居酒屋へ行くことが禁じられ、家で食べ物を味わいながらお酒を飲むこと、名付けて「家飲み」が有名になってきた。飲み会に比べると、酔っぱらったとしても家にいるので外にいる問題がより少なくなり、緊張を感じることも減るだろう。

本論文の中心は、こうした現代日本の飲み物の文化に関するマーケティングである。現代の日本では、ドリンクに関するマーケティング戦略は、商品の特徴をどのように生かしているのかを明確にするのが目的である。ドリンク商品のマーケティングでは、どのようなメディアで商品を見せているのか、何が消費者の目を引くのは魅力的な特徴になっているのか、を明らかにすることが、論文の中心になる。現代日本の消費者の心に「買いたい！」という気持ちを起こさせるドリンク商品について探究するのが、本研究の目的になる。

この修士論文は四章に分けられている。

第一章は日本の現代の飲み物の文化についての章である。飲み会や家飲みなどの概念やメリットとデメリットを分析し、注目するドリンク商品についての日本での歴史を語る。そして、アンケート調査を行うことで、現代の日本人の好みを調べた。アンケートでは、

調査対象者の方々に、ドリンク商品の好みに関するコメントを自由に書いてもらうことで、色々な面白い立場を観察することができ、日本人のお酒やソフトドリンクに対する好みを知ることができた。あえて私が調査するお酒とソフトドリンクの名前をアンケート調査に書き込まず、自由回答を使うことで、アンケート対象者のさまざまな意見を知ることができた。

第二章は、マーケティングストラテジーに関する理論的考察である。おもに F. コトラーと G. アームストロングの『マーケティング原理』を使いながら、マーケティングの概念やマーケティングはどのように行われるか、何がお客様の気持ちをもっと喜ばせるかについて整理し、おうすれば消費者の知覚と認識の中に商品をうまく浮かび上がらせるか、に関するストラテジーを分析する。各商品は異なる特徴があることで、異なるストラテジーを作り上げる必要がある。

第三章は、第二章の理論的枠組に基づいて、日本のいくつかのドリンク商品のマーケティングストラテジーの分析を行う。本章では、とくにソフトドリンクの「ポカリスエット」、「ポカリイオンウォーター」と「ヤクルト1000」のウェブサイトとCM動画を分析する。これらの商品のマーケティングストラテジーに共通する特徴は、体に良い影響があり、体をよりよく行動させることやストレス緩和といった新しい可能性を人間に与える、という形で、商品の特徴を記述している点である。

第四章で分析するのはアサヒの「生ジョッキ缶」のマーケティングストラテジーである。アサヒの「生ジョッキ缶」は、ビールの缶のフタが全開することで泡が発泡し、居酒屋で生ビールを飲んでいる感じを醸し出すような商品である。中身のビールはアサヒがずっと前から販売してきた「スーパードライ」であるにもかかわらず、フタと泡の発泡をマーケティングストラテジーの中心にしたことで、この商品は消費者の目に完全に革新的な商品になった。また「生ジョッキ缶」のCMは、視聴者に対して「楽しみ」の可能性を消費者に与えている。

結論としては、日本におけるドリンクのマーケティングでは、商品の特徴を生かし、どんな場合にはあるドリンク商品を飲むかを明確にする、という共通点を持つ。同時に、ポカリスエットとポカリエオンウォーター、ヤクルト 1000 とアサヒ生ジョッキ缶では、それぞれ強調される点が異なる。分析したソフトドリンクのいくつかは、体に良い影響を与え、疲れた時やストレスが高まる時には飲むと良い、とされる。ポカリのドリンク商品は電解質を供給し、ヤクルト 1000 は体をよく休ませる影響を持っている。アサヒ生ジョッキ缶は、すでによく知られているビールをさらに生かして、ただ異なるフタを利用することで爆発的に有名になってきた。ドリンク商品の特徴を消費者に伝達するのはマーケティングの役割である。日本においてさまざまな商品が有名になってきた理由はマーケティングが理由の一つである。

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Introduction

Japanese society has the feature of being fast, from the work point of view some people are always rushing to get into a train to get to their workplace or for going back home. It seems like a never-ending spiral with no stop except sleeping at night. Moreover, it happens that colleagues might want to go out drinking after a tough day at work to cheer up and have some small talk or chats with each other or even being invited by executives such as the chief of the office they work in to drink and share opinions and ideas (Nomikai). Handling such events can be tough as there might be problems related to alcohol being involved, and some people may be more prone to order soft drinks rather than alcoholic ones, not to have problems when coming back home.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, some people have been less likely to participate in such events and have shifted to a more responsible participation at this kind of events, joining less times or even drinking at home (Ienomi), which seems better in terms of how much a person can drink and safety since there is not a long way from the living room to the bedroom in one's house.

Moreover, by using a survey for outlining how Japanese people from different age groups perceive soft and alcoholic drinks, this work had as its first chapter a panoramic view about the actual drinking culture in Japan, made out of Nomikai and Ienomi, and some interesting comments made in the survey about the perception of the cited soft and alcoholic drinks.

Since this work's main feature is the analysis of marketing campaigns in Japan for those drinks, having a general idea of how Japanese people perceive the products, there is the need to understand how marketing works and its strategies for creating a better advertising strategy tailored to make the most prominent features of a product be more attractive for customers. Showing the correct way to handle a product of choosing a specific way of advertising it can be more effective in terms of how a product is perceived by customers and sales.

By doing so, the aim of this work is to analyze how a marketing campaign in Japan of both soft and alcoholic drinks: how are the main features of a product? How a company chose to make those features more appealing to customers? is the advertising strategy good enough to generate good sales and make the product a good one for customers? Does the product have a good value for the customers? This is the focus of this work.

The first chapter is an overview of the drinking culture in Japan as already mentioned. Nomikai, Ienomi, general perception of Japanese people about soft drinks and alcoholic drinks. moreover, a history of the drinks which will be analyzed was necessary. In particular, beer history in Japan and the general history of soft drinks will be the focus of the chapter.

The second chapter has as focus how to create a marketing campaign which is effective for a product to be perceived in the right way by consumers. An introduction about what is marketing and how it works was also needed to have a better understanding of the advertising strategies and choices

regarding products and media which are suitable for customers to reach easily.

The third chapter is the analysis of three marketing campaigns: Pocari Sweat, Pocari Ion Water and Yakult 1000. The three products have the key feature of helping the body in feeling relaxed and less tired after the consumption of it, giving to the chapter a fil-rouge which can be the “possibility” of better performances and feeling better by drinking such drink. The supply of chemicals which help the body in its functioning is what the soft drinks analyzed have in common.

The fourth chapter is an analysis of the marketing campaign of the Asahi beer “Nama Jokki Kan”, which is the Asahi’s “Super-Dry” Beer in a particular can which has its key feature in the upper lid which completely opens. By this action, foam comes out from the can, giving a sense of fun in drinking it from the can, just like the beer which is usually served in traditional taverns. By creating this new lid, the aim was to give this beer a sense of novelty and the idea of rediscovering the fun in drinking beer, creating the idea of a new product which can give customers a bit of happiness after a tough day, especially in the still ongoing pandemic situation.

Chapter 1: overview of Japanese drinking culture

1.1: Introduction

Japan has been the focus of a multitude of studies about its peculiar culture, language, fashion, and many different topics. Its beverage culture is also very fascinating: starting from its typical drinks such as Ramune or alcoholic drinks made from rice¹ (Japan House London, s.d.) , commonly called “*sake*” in other languages. As culture can be expressed in many ways² , the beverage culture of Japan will be discussed in this chapter, along a survey for better understanding how Japanese people think about soft drinks and alcoholic drinks, the topics of this work.

To better understand the Japanese beverage culture, the start of this dissertation will begin with a panoramic of the post- World War II scenario for soft drinks and alcoholic drinks. Then, show how Japanese people usually spend time drinking both outside and inside home and with who, to end with the survey created for this chapter.

The aim of this work is to better understand how the culture of Japan regarding its approach to soft and alcoholic drinks by analyzing several marketing campaigns for a better comprehension of how marketing works in this field and how it can grasp the attention of customers.

1.2: History of Beer during the Post-War Period up to now

Around 1955, Japan’s economy recovered from the enormous expenses made during the Second World War by entering the Japanese economic miracle³ and because of this exorbitant growth, in 1956 the government announced that Japan had overcome the post-war period⁴. The strong economic growth led to increased income and consequentially, to Japan’s mass-consumption society, and the economic growth in the later years was steady.

Due to the lift of restrictions about raw barley used for beer production, competition in matters of production and sales rose to a point in which the production increased five times approximately in just ten years.

After the defeat of Japan in the Second World War, poverty was spread all over the country, but after a period of severe inflation, economy started to rise again. In May of 1949, free sale of beer resumed: the price after a rapid growth was stabilized around 130 yen for a large bottle. Still, it was

¹Japan House London, SAKE “Nihonshu”, consulted on 30 December 2022. <https://www.japanhouselondon.uk/discover/sake-nihonshu/#:~:text=Sake%20is%20the%20general%20term,country%2C%20and%20abundant%20soft%20water>

² World Intellectual Property Organization, consulted on 30 December 2022. [https://www.wipo.int/tk/en/folklore/#:~:text=Traditional%20cultural%20expressions%20\(TCEs\)%2C,other%20artistic%20or%20cultural%20expressions](https://www.wipo.int/tk/en/folklore/#:~:text=Traditional%20cultural%20expressions%20(TCEs)%2C,other%20artistic%20or%20cultural%20expressions)

³ Berkeley Economic Review , The Japanese Economic Miracle, consulted on 31 January 2023. <https://econreview.berkeley.edu/the-japanese-economic-miracle/#:~:text=Known%20as%20the%20Japanese%20Economic,increased%20for%2020%20consecutive%20years>

⁴ Kirin Holdings, History of Beer in Japan, consulted on 16 January 2023. https://museum.kirinholdings.com/history/kaisetsu/bk_06.html

seen as a luxury product. In June 1950 beer halls reopened, offering 500 ml of beer for 150 yen: rather high price for the period, but people were happy about the reopening after a long time of closure during the war period⁵.

Beer had a steady increase in popularity due to the high demand, and in 1954 with the start of free competition in the country, sales and production were high. Shipments to Japan were frequent and in 1963 beer' sales accounted for more than half of alcoholic beverages in Japan.

Since free sales started, beer consumption was helped from the rooftop gardens. It was the period in which events were held in those places to boost consumption, while also hosting parties as well: people on their way to home could stop there and have a mug of beer for 200 yen, along traditional snacks as well. Colorful lanterns were used as decorations, while live music was played by bands to make the atmosphere more festive. In 1972, Tokyo had about 100 rooftop gardens, with the average cost for customers was 1000 yen.

Not only rooftop gardens and restaurants were the places in which beer was consumed: drinking beer at home became more and more popular. According to a poll conducted by the ministry of Finance's Taxation Bureau, around 50% of the whole consumption of beer was consumed at home, due to the new technology of electric refrigerators which came to Japan around the late 50's along black and white television and washing machines. Beer was either delivered by liquor shops or purchases by customers themselves, and families without an electric refrigerator could have their beer chilled at the shop by paying an additional fee⁶.

Refrigerators had an impactful role on beer consumption: the penetration of this product reached high levels in the 60's and since beer was already so popular, advertisement for fridges used photographs of those products filled with beer bottles. Because of the use of fridges brought to Japan by an improvement in living standards, cold beer became available at any time: as a direct consequence beer's popularity skyrocketed and it was common to see scenes of people drinking beer while watching tv⁷.

Women grew fond of the alcoholic drink after the war, and this was another factor that made beer the most popular alcoholic drink in Japan. Asahi Shimbun also states in an article dated 24 April 1955, that women are gathering at beer parties, while in 1956 another article talked about women being a consistent part of the total customers of beer halls. Before the war, way less women gathered out in beer halls, but after a survey conducted in 1956, more than half of answers were positive about

⁵ Kirin Holdings, History of Beer in Japan, consulted on 16 January 2023. https://museum.kirinholdings.com/history/kaisetsu/bk_06a.html

⁶ Kirin Holdings, History of Beer in Japan, consulted on 16 January 2023. https://museum.kirinholdings.com/history/kaisetsu/bk_06b.html

⁷ Kirin Holdings, History of Beer in Japan, consulted on 16 January 2023. https://museum.kirinholdings.com/history/kaisetsu/bk_06c.html

the fact that sees women as allowed to drink beer⁸.

Beer was previously considered a summer only drink, but due to the abnormal demand, it became a drink for all the seasons, as demand in other seasons remained steady. Beer started to be considered as a present for the mid year's gift called "Ochugen" (this tradition has people give presents to people who takes care of the person giving the gift)⁹, and advertising wanted beer to be perceived as a proper gift for the festivity.

Starting with the 60's, drinking beer was very popular due to the spread of outdoor activities to be done with family such as going to the sea or in the mountains. Even at amusement parks or at the cinemas drinking beer became common, as it is now in cinemas.

Canned beer, which was introduced in 1958, became the new mainstream trend, with a major spread in the 70's: after the war beer started to be perceived as the alcoholic drink that anyone can drink and enjoy, being recognized as a national drink¹⁰.

In the 80's, the focus shifted from products to services, as most of the innovative and living standards were satisfying for Japanese people, and companies offered a more diversified product lineup. The most important dietary changes were about rice, seafood and meat : while rice consumption fell under 80 kilograms per person a year, meat and seafood's consumption reversed, having meat in the first place and seafood in second place. The 70's had in their scenario in Japan the opening of Kentucky Fried Chicken and McDonald's, along the various family restaurants. Beer was served in these new restaurants as well, while the habit of ordering a beer as the first drink while going out drinking became a newly established habit¹¹.

Beer's consumption had a stable growth rate in that period. Companies tried their best to accommodate latest needs by diversifying their lineup.

Since the Japanese society faced some new trends in the new decade. Shift to nuclear families, women entering the workforce of the country, and the ageing population. This led customers to have new tastes and likings based on their new lifestyle, with needs shifting towards individualism, which was what led to selective consumption based on tasted and preferences. Beer companies had to face this challenge of changing habits and attitudes, by creating cans of different size. Cans are more practical than glass bottles, as they are lighter and more resistant, while having the feature of being

⁸ Kirin Holdings, History of Beer in Japan, consulted on 16 January 2023. https://museum.kirinholdings.com/history/kaisetsu/bk_06d.html

⁹ Central Japan Railway Company, お中元とお歳暮の違いと意味とは？, consulted on 16 January 2023. https://e-mono.jr-central.co.jp/column/ochugen/ochugen_chishiki.html

¹⁰ Kirin Holdings, History of Beer in Japan, consulted on 16 January 2023. https://museum.kirinholdings.com/history/kaisetsu/bk_06e.html

¹¹ Kirin Holdings, History of Beer in Japan, consulted on 16 January 2023. https://museum.kirinholdings.com/history/kaisetsu/bk_07.html

a good thermal conductive material¹².

The new trend of canned beer was more compatible with the recent lifestyle which was spreading all over Japan, and the consumption of canned beer had a steady increase in the 80's. one of the most prominent features of the cans was the design along the beer, which led to a strong competition between beer makers.

In the previous years, alcoholic drinks were often delivered at home by liquor shops, but with the shift to a lifestyle in which both men and women worked, home delivery became less convenient. Moreover, customers wanted to purchase only the right amount of what they needed, according to their lifestyle. As a result, home delivery became less convenient, while more and more people purchased their products at liquor stores or vending machines. In the 70's, due to lack of manpower, vending machines became a greatly popular sales revenue¹³.

In 1989 the latest laws on selling alcoholic beverages were the cause of various liquor shops to open. As the laws dictated the rules of opening new shops discount shops and convenience stores became more and more popular due to the possibility of purchasing alcohol in such places.

Bottled draft beer (here defined as “a beer which has not been heat treated”) had a boom in the late 70's. The word “draft” (生、nama, draft) had such an impact to customers which grew fond of this: it reached more than 30% of the beer market's accounting in 1983¹⁴.

To meet market demands, companies in that period launched new products which were tailored made to meet consumer needs to reach more consumers which lifestyle was healthier, by introducing beers with lower calories amount or less alcohol. The most popular beer was the “Dry Beer”, which had a higher fermentation level. A refreshing beer which was very appreciated from the younger generations. After the launch of this product, companies wanted to create more product targeted to different segments of the beer market, to attract more customers and even media, which could make their product popular¹⁵.

As the so called “Bubble” of the “Bubble Economy” bursted, the japanese economy was in a slump for a decade more or less: this caused a great deflation. This was seen as an opportunity for luxury brands or restaurants to come to Japan, and this may trigger in some customers the need to match lifestyle with high-end products. Information Technology is another feature of the late 90's, due to its being widespread across the country, which changed the way some customers purchase

¹² Kirin Holdings, History of Beer in Japan, consulted on 16 January 2023. https://museum.kirinholdings.com/history/kaisetsu/bk_07e.html

¹³ Kirin Holdings, History of Beer in Japan, consulted on 16 January 2023. https://museum.kirinholdings.com/history/kaisetsu/bk_07c.html

¹⁴ Kirin Holdings, History of Beer in Japan, consulted on 16 January 2023. https://museum.kirinholdings.com/history/kaisetsu/bk_08.html

¹⁵ Kirin Holdings, History of Beer in Japan, consulted on 16 January 2023. https://museum.kirinholdings.com/history/kaisetsu/bk_08b.html

their goods by using internet¹⁶.

Regarding the beer industry, the need to revitalize the market by competition between companies had a beneficial effect on the industry, as shipments going to other countries reached an all-time high point. It was also created the Happoshu, an alcoholic beverage which contains less malt than normal beer: this product attracted some attention from customers.

As the various places in which it was possible to purchase alcohol was growing fast due to supermarkets and convenience stores which started to sell alcoholic beverages, along canned and ready to eat meals that can be enjoyed along alcohol, canned beer' sales had a great growth rate. Even if the distribution outlets of alcoholic beverages were more than before, vending machines selling alcohol's distribution was almost stopped to prevent underage drinking¹⁷.

Information Technology's diffusion was also another factor of varied purchase styles: customers usually review products on the internet so other customers can better understand which product is more adaptable to customers' lifestyle and tastes. Now it has become a habit to purchase even alcoholic beverages using internet, after checking information about a certain product.

After the dry beer started a new wave of products, more products were released, with a good number of products coming from overseas due to the deflation of yen. This kind of beers were displayed in department stores, such as specialized stores in foreign beers. In 1994 small breweries started to product western-style beer as a response to the lowered standards of minimum productions, and this new wave of beers generated buzz around the new style of beer¹⁸.

Recently, as differences between products made in different ways, such as the happoshu with less malt than beer is encouraging more customers to try and differentiate their purchase habits based on their tastes¹⁹.

1.3: History of Soft Drinks from the Post-War period up to now

For a summary about the history of soft drinks in Japan, here is a brief history from the Soft Drinks Review, volume three of autumn 2005.

Since they were launched in 1955 this new type of drink revolutionized the lifestyle of Japanese consumers along their dietary habits, along having a steady growth, both in terms of quantities produced and differentiation of drinks. Looking at a graph presented by the Japan soft drinks association, it is possible to determine six different periods distinguished by several turning

¹⁶ Kirin Holdings, History of Beer in Japan, consulted on 16 January 2023. https://museum.kirinholdings.com/history/kaisetsu/bk_08c.html

¹⁷ Kirin Holdings, History of Beer in Japan, consulted on 16 January 2023. https://museum.kirinholdings.com/history/kaisetsu/bk_08e.html

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

points.

When soft drinks were introduced, the main drinks on the market were ramune, ciders and fruit juices, but in 1961 with the withdrawal from foreign companies and their funds, the Coca-Cola became the only foreign drink. Entering in the economic growth period symbolized by the Tokyo Olympic Games of 1964, Coca-Cola became the first consumed soft drink in Japan.

In 1966 one of the most preferred soft drinks, coffee drinks, started to be sold on the market. Along the appearance of vending machines, canned coffee drinks were inserted in the category of non-carbonated drinks. With the more import of fruits, which caused more production of more drinks made with fruit, the latter type of drinks contributed to reaching more than 5 million kiloliters of soft drinks produced, entering in the first period of growth.

In the 80's, new types of drinks were introduced, such as sport drinks or oolong cha. These new drinks had some beneficial properties for the human body, which led them to be called special drinks, causing the market to become more differentiated in terms of types of drinks.

In 1982 the use of PET bottles for canned drinks was approved, and because of this the demand for drinks in families was more than ever. Because of this amount of demand, more vending machines were placed in the country, leading to the number of such machines to be more than 2 million in 1984. New bottles and drinks had the effect of leading the market to great and rapid changes.

With the diffusion of ready to eat foods in convenience stores, the amount consumed of green tea-based drinks grew, thanks to the introduction of smaller PET bottles. With the sustain of consumers which saw small bottles as very helpful, the drinks in such bottles had an enormous expansion.

Another type of drinks which had a great boom other than sports drink, is drinks either made with tea or mineral water, without adding sugar in the drink. These new drinks have the feature of being healthy and created the until that moment non-existent way of buying drinks and drinking immediately after the purchase. The new so called “Healthy Waters” are still shaping the future of the soft drink's scenario²⁰.

1.4: Nominication: Drinking and communication.

After a workday, it is common in Japan that colleagues of an office go together to drink, usually alcohol. This practice is called “飲み会” (Nomikai, which means to meet and to go out together to drink). The word derives from the verb “飲む” (Nomu, to drink) and the kanji of “会う” (Au, to meet). Usually, this kind of meetings are held in a different place than the workplace, and the

²⁰ Soft Drink Review, Vol.3 Autumn 2005, consulted on 16 January 2023. http://www.j-sda.or.jp/images_j/pdf/seiinsai/vol_03.pdf (pp. 5-8)

aim of the so called Nomikai is to strengthen the teamwork inside an office and have opportunities to talk with people with superior rank, such as office executives or the office boss. In a company, different offices held meetings like this frequently, and it has become quite a normal event for Japanese companies^{21 22}.

But is nomikai's culture really appreciated after the spread of the corona virus? A questionnaire compiled by the Sanrio Research institute on the 30th November 2020 shows that if not limiting the field to work's nomikai, more than the 50% of the interviewed people like to drink alcohol, when the research field is limited to the nomikai with people from the workplace, the positive answers drop to a little more than 30%, with less than that percentage of people willing to participate to a nomikai²³. This phenomenon seems to have some problematic aspects by looking at the data of people who are willing to participate to a Nomikai. Here are listed some possible hypotheses.

Some workers have a poor image of this kind of events, depicting those as a waste of money, as it may happen that the chairman of the office may choose to split the bill between themselves and the rest of the workers, or seen as a waste of time that could be spent by fostering own interests. Since drinking alcohol is involved, it may be a cause to poorer performances on the day after the nomikai. Mental health is also a factor to talk about: some people may not want to talk about their job or peculiar situations regarding their workplace after being done with their job for the day, moreover with their colleagues which can be the trigger of some undesired conflicts. Supervisors or bosses of an office have a role in this situation: it may happen that a drunk supervisor offers a better position to his workers, but when talking about it the day after, the supervisor may be evasive and pass what they said as something thought on a moment in which they were drunk, and not real intentions of promotion in the office hierarchy²⁴.

1.5: Ienomi: drinking at home.

While drinking in pubs and traditional taverns (居酒屋 – izakaya, japanese traditional tavern) is popular in Japan, drinking at home is popular as well, especially in the latest years with the spread of corona virus. The word is created by the union of the kanji “家” (ie, home) and “飲む” (Nomu,

²¹ Sanro Research Institute Inc., 飲みニケーションは好きですか?, consulted on 16 January 2023. https://www.e-sanro.net/share/pdf/research/pr_2102-1.pdf

²² Senses Lab, 飲みニケーションは本当に必要か?, consulted on 16 January 2023. <https://product-senses.mazrica.com/senseslab/column/nomination>

²³ Hataractive, 本当にデメリットばかり? 飲みニケーションとは, consulted on 17 January 2023. <https://hataractive.jp/useful/2356/>

²⁴ Senses Lab, 飲みニケーションは本当に必要か?, consulted on 16 January 2023. <https://product-senses.mazrica.com/senseslab/column/nomination>

to drink)²⁵. Compared to drinking outside, according to an article published on “fumakilla.jp”²⁶ there are several good points about drinking at home:

- Drinking with one’s pace and not feeling the urgency to drink with the same pace of the other people drinking, tasting better the alcohol, while choosing the quantity of alcohol to drink.
- No need to rush to take the last train. By drinking at home when one is tired, the bed is just a few steps away, without worrying about being on time for the train or other transportation. This implies that there is no need to leave the place in which someone is drinking, leaving more time to drink in the case of drinking slow.
- It may be a trivial point, but choosing which side-dishes to enjoy with alcohol can be mentioned, as some people may not like what a tavern offers as side-dishes.

In Japan, during the pandemic situation caused by Corona virus, for several months starting from April 7, 2020²⁷ had a direct hit on restaurants and traditional taverns, forcing them to close for preventing the spread of the disease. As a response to this phenomenon, ienomi became more and more popular.

1.6: Comments on the survey on the actual situation of drinking in Japan

Starting January 15, I submitted to Japanese friends a survey²⁸ about their habits on drinking both soft drinks and alcoholic drinks, without specifying which drinks were the aim of my dissertation in order to make it more complete and have a better view on Japanese people’s ideas on soft drinks and alcoholic drinks. Everyone had the opportunity to add short comments on the topic after both parts on soft drinks and alcoholic drinks, and I will analyze the most interesting ones. Since the only compulsory questions were sex, age, if the person drinks soft drinks or alcohol, some answers will show a number of replies inferior to the total of answers. The aim was to give to people willing to answer to the survey more freedom in replies, doing so they could skip answers. By skipping answers, it I stated in the first part of the survey that I will consider the unchecked question as “the possible answers given don’t fit my drinking habits”. I chose to divide the survey in two similar parts: soft drinks and alcoholic drinks.

The answers have been 118. 53 people identify as male (45,7%) , 62 as female (53,4%), while

²⁵ Ienomi Style, ienomi style とは, consulted on 17 January 2023. <https://www.ienomistyle.com/about/>

²⁶ For Your Life Powered by Fumakilla, 【家飲み・宅飲み特集】家飲みの楽しみ方からグッズまであわせて紹介！ Consulted on 17 January 2023. <https://fumakilla.jp/foryourlife/591/>

²⁷ Prime Minister’s Office of Japan, [COVID-19] Declaration of a State of Emergency in response to the Novel Coronavirus Disease (April 16), consulted on 17 January 2023. https://japan.kantei.go.jp/ongoingtopics/_00020.html

²⁸ <https://forms.gle/M3D1JfLDYiLRuTUq9>

one person chose not to identify in such genres (0,9%). Based on their age, the age groups created are listed below:

- 0-18 : 1 (0,9%)
- 19-29: 86 (74,1%)
- 30-39: 10 (8,6%)
- 40-49: 6 (5,2%)
- 50-59: 8 (6,9%)
- More than 60 years old: 5 (4,3%).

Soft drink results

The first question is: “Do you drink soft drinks?”. 107 people (92,3%) replied positively, while the rest of the answers were negative, only 7 people (7,7%). When asking the frequency of drinking soft drinks in a week, in terms of rarely, sometimes, almost every day and every day, people replied as below mentioned:

- 37 people: rarely (32,5%)
- 39 people: sometimes (34,2%)
- 31 people: almost every day (27,2%)
- 7 people: every day (6,1%)

As the result of the total amount of answers is less than 117 (114), I will assume that 3 people drink soft drinks less than one time per week or don't consume soft drinks, like some of the people replied.

The second question is about the tastes of consumers: “Why do you drink a soft drink?”. The four possible answers are: “taste”, “color or packaging”, “price” and “I want to try it”. In the survey there was the possibility to add a free answer, as some people did, along choosing multiple possible voices from the listed ones.

- Taste: 90 (80,4%)
- Color/Packaging: 14 (12,5%)
- Price: 18 (16,1%)
- Because they want to try it: 45 (40,2%)
- Four people added their own replies, which adds to the 2,7% of the total answers.

As presented, a lot of people are more liking to choose a drink based on its taste and because they want to try it, while paying less attention to the packaging or the price. Stating that they want to try a beverage implies that the color of the beverage, along with the way it is presented to customers

seems appealing to them: even if they pay little to no attention to the packaging and the color of a soft drink, marketing's role was efficient in making the customer purchase a soft drink as it generated an emotional response²⁹, as it will be mentioned in the next chapter.

The next question is about the events in which they drink a soft drink. As mentioned before, there was the possibility to choose multiple voices and add a voice if the listed events didn't fit in one's drinking habits.

- Eating: 43 (38,4%)
- Meeting up with friends: 55 (49,1%)
- During lessons: 10 (8,9%)
- Relaxing: 64 (57,1%)
- Four people added their own replies, which adds to the 2,7% of the total answers.

It is interesting to notice how people are more inclined to enjoy a soft drink to relax and meet up with friends. As a hypothesis, since the majority of people are in the age group between 19 and 29 years old, they may enjoy a soft drink while having a break from classes at university. Having asked for some comments and personal opinions about soft drinks, out of 29 short comments, I will conduct an analysis of some of them, which can be divided in two sections.

Some people are worried about the amount of calories and sugar in the soft drink, being worried for their health. One comment states that drinking soft drinks every day can be dangerous as some drinks are very tasty because of the sugar contained in it. One comment describes soft drinks as “ゴミ” (gomi), as to indicate that this person considers soft drinks as junk food, bad for health.

Another comment depicts soft drinks as tasty, but this person states that they are not prone to try soft drinks with “weird colors such as green or purple” (translation from the original comment). This comment has a particular feature: describing the color of a soft drink as “weird” must have a reason, and the person who stated this said in a comment they wanted to add for the survey. Their comment states that the green color of a drink is not really appealing to them, since it is too unnatural, making them want to buy other soft drinks.

Some other people see soft drinks as a sweet treat to themselves after a long day of studying or after a particularly boring lesson. Three comments stated that these people usually meet up with friends from other departments of their university to have a soft drink together after their lessons on a weekly basis. Another comment was very interesting: as this person doesn't like alcohol due to bad experiences which were omitted in the comment, this person and their share mates established that

²⁹ Business News Daily, The Science of Persuasion: How to Influence Consumer Choice, consulted on 17 January 2023.
<https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/10151-how-to-influence-consumer-decisions.html>

when they want to have some fun in the night, alcohol is prohibited to make this person feel welcomed. As other comments state, soft drinks can be an alternative to alcoholic drinks when partying with friends.

Alcoholic drinks

Regarding the consume of alcoholic drinks, the results are the following: 98 people (83,8%) replied positively, the remaining 19 people (16,2%) stated that they don't drink alcohol. For what concerns how many times a week they drink alcohol, the replies are listed below.

- 39 people: rarely (35,5%)
- 46 people: sometimes (41,8%)
- 19 people: almost every day (17,3%)
- 6 people: every day (5,5%)

As the result of the total amount of answers is less than 117 (110), I will assume that 3 people drink drinks less than one time per week, or don't drink alcohol, like some people replied.

The results about why the people who replied to the survey drink alcohol are outlined below.

- Taste: 75 people (73,5%)
- Color or Packaging: 10 (9,8%)
- Price: 7 (6,9%)
- Because they want to try it: 46 (45,1%)
- 13 people added their own answers, each one consisting of 1% of the total.

Worth mentioning are some comments which highlight that drinking alcohol has something to do with fun: between the free answers given, 8 out of 13 are related to having fun: meeting friends, spending fun moments together and relaxing are what these answers give as reply.

The last question, about the moments in which they drink alcohol, sees the following options as replies:

- Eating: 33 people (32%)
- Meeting up with friends: 71 people (68,9%)
- *Nomikai*: 45 people (43,7%)
- Relaxing: 40 people (38,8%)
- Three people added their own answers, each one consisting of the 1% of the total.

The replies here give a somehow clear vision of how Japanese usually drink alcohol: meeting up with friends in most of cases, while *Nomikai* are in second place. Since the majority of people who replied are in the age group of 19 to 29 years old, they may be more likely to go drink with friends or

join a Nomikai promoted by their boss, since they may be freshly graduated or just joined an office, as most of the freshly graduated people who come out from university are nearly twenty-two years old³⁰. In this section as well, comments about alcohol consumption tend to have two ways: some people are careful with the consumption of alcohol as it is dangerous for the human body, and they try to limit their consumption. Another comment adds that since the person who wrote this comment prefers not to feel dizzy or tipsy, they are more likely to order drinks with a low alcoholic grade. Three comments are about moderation: one person states that they drink every day a can of beer when home after work, to relax while watching tv or having a bath. Another comment states that this person owns an izakaya in Fukuoka, and this person usually consumes alcohol once a day, and they enjoy choosing the most drunk alcoholic drink of the day to drink it after closing the tavern and wonder why a lot of people ordered that peculiar drink on that day. One last comment adds that when drinking with colleagues, this person feels a lot of pressure due to drinking alcohol, so they tend to decline invites to drink with coworkers to avoid particularly unpleasant situations.

Some other comments are more prone to the consumption of alcohol. One comment was written in English, and states “No liquor no life!”, indicating that this person enjoys drinking alcohol a lot. Some comments are about creating the right atmosphere with friends and alcohol, others underline that without alcohol going out with friends can be boring. To conclude, a comment describes alcohol as the 「万能薬」 (bannouyaku – panacea, a mythological remedy that can cure every disease³¹), comparing it to a miraculous medicine.

1.7: Conclusions

As the survey is over, after evaluating the replies and the comments, it is possible to state that Japanese people do like soft drinks and alcoholic drink, but since there are risks for the human body’s well-being, the majority of Japanese people tend to be more careful with consumption in order not to have health issues that the types of drinks just cited may provoke.

³⁰ Hataractive, 新卒の年齢っていくつまで？制限の有無についても解説, consulted on 17 January, 2023. <https://hataractive.jp/useful/3697/>

³¹ Cambridge Dictionary, “panacea”, consulted on 17 January 2023. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/panacea>

Chapter 2: How to create a marketing strategy and choosing the most important features for a product

2.1: Introduction

After an explanation of Japanese drinking culture passing through the history of beer and soft drinks, the products that will be analyzed in the next chapters, and analyzing the survey made to line out how Japanese consumers choose their products, the aim of this chapter is to outline how a marketing strategy can be effective and will make consumers purchase a product.

To do so, there is the need to outline the basics of marketing: how it works, what is marketing and how a marketing strategy can effectively give customers the right perception about a product, with the aim to sell it. It is needed then to explain how marketing works and its peculiarities to help in the understanding of the marketing campaigns that will be analyzed in chapters three and four. By consulting “Principles of Marketing” by Philip Kotler and Gary Armstrong³², this chapter will focus on what is marketing and how it can affect the perception of customers about a product. The consulted book is a manual of marketing, which was chosen since it is a complete review of how marketing is applied to daily life products and explains the various steps for creating an effective marketing strategy from the beginning to the very end.

2.2: Creating and capturing customer value

With the term “marketing” the most known definition is the management of profitable relationships with clients: a good comprehension of client’s needs to create value for them and gain value back from satisfied customers. Its goal is to attract customers with the promise of a superior value, while also keeping current clients and if permitted, obtain new customers. To put it in simple words, marketing can be described as the exchange of value.

The aim is to exchange value by understanding what customers need and how to satisfy their needs. Needs can be seen as a state of deprivation: physical deprivation, social or individual deprivation. A need can become a desire (or “wants” as indicated by Kotler and Armstrong in their “Principles of Marketing”), that is shaped by culture and identity. As described by Kotler and Armstrong, assuming that American people need food but want fast food products, Japanese people’s needs can be roughly shaped in “katsudon, okonomiyaki, sushi and green tea”. As wishes have money (or whatever kind of buying power), wishes turn into demands. Paying customers demand that what they ask for has the best value for them and can satisfy their needs.

To satisfy what customers want, there is the marketing offering: a combination of products and services with the aim to satisfy a certain need. Not only products and services can be defined as

³² Kotler Philip, Armstrong Gary, *Principles of Marketing* (14th ed.) , Pearson Prentice Hall, chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 14, 15.

a marketing offering, experiences and information can be defined as marketing offering, even if the sale of these doesn't result into owning a tangible thing. It should be taken into consideration that putting too much effort in focusing only on creating the best product without considering the potential experience given from it or the benefit a certain product can offer to customers suffer from marketing myopia. Focusing on consumer's needs is also important.

Since there is an abundance of product that can virtually satisfy the needs of a customer, how is possible to choose a valid product? The answer is the expectation³³ formed about a given product: if a consumer is satisfied about its purchase, then buying again the same product or from the same brand is a considerably high possibility. They can also influence people near them in purchasing the same product or experience if they feel satisfied. Setting the right level of expectations is quite useful: setting a low level of expectations can be helpful since customers will be happy about their purchase but maybe the product will not attract a lot of customers, while high expectations may lead customers to dissatisfaction and disappointment.

2.3: Marketing management

The marketing management can be defined as how to choose the right target and how to create profitable relations with the clients within that specific target. It must be clearly chosen who a company wants to serve and how the company is working for generating the best value for the client. Choosing the target is an important phase since if a company tries to serve more than the right market segment, it may end up serving nobody (generating a marketing myopia). Selecting the most appropriate customers leads to profits and good relations with customers.

Generating profit can be seen as a given, but how can the marketing management help in generating a profit? There are 5 concepts that can carry out a marketing strategy.

- Production: it can be helpful for products that are affordable and highly available. Management should improve the distribution and production channel. It is a good way to carry out a marketing strategy when there are low costs and high efficiency of production. There downside is that since companies may focus on how to operate better and lose sight of the satisfaction of customers (the true objective behind the marketing strategy).
- Product: this approach puts at its center the continuous technical improvements about products such as performance and new key features. While adopting this strategy, the core of the operations is striving to get a better product that can satisfy customers. Focusing only on the new potential features of a product can lead to a marketing myopia, though.

³³ マーケティングにおける期待の重要性, 森藤ちひろ, 経営戦略研究 vol. 3, consulted on 20 December 2022.

- Selling: this approach needs a large-scale promotion effort because the marketed products are usually unsought. The core action of the selling approach is to highlight the benefits that a certain purchase can give to customers. The main risk is that a company may sell what it creates but the products can be different from the needs of the market. Companies sometimes make poor assumptions about customers forgetting their disappointment about a purchase and repeat it, which doesn't happen frequently.
- Marketing: the marketing approach is defined by focusing on the customers' needs and how to respond for delivering satisfaction. The approach used here starts with understanding the real needs of a customer and creating a way that can be the best for satisfying them. Customer satisfaction here becomes a core point of the approach as it can be seen as a contrasting approach to the selling concept which heavily relies on selling products or services. Knowing how to win customers and how to anticipate customers' potential needs is a driving point of this approach.
- Social marketing: the core point of this approach consists in searching for a marketing strategy that can have a social impact such as meeting customers' needs while gaining a profit and doing good things for the society.

As the marketing strategy approaches its realization by outlining the five points for gaining a profit, it must be chosen how to act to promote a certain product and which programs, or strategies are suitable for gaining the best profit. For a better outlining of the aims, there are four grand concept-groups which help in narrowing the potential options for gaining the best profit.: the so called "4p's" of marketing.

- Product: to satisfy a desire, there must be something that becomes the object of desire from customers.
- Price: how much can be charged by companies to purchase a given product.
- Place: how to make a given product available to consumers.
- Promotion: how to show the key features of a given product to enhance its possibilities of being sold to potential customers.

There must be a tailored marketing analysis as well to fully understand the scenario of a certain product into the whole marketplace,

2.4: Customers relationship management

To simply define how this function works, it all comes down to how customers perceive a given product and how this perception can affect the perception of other products. Customers buy things by thinking about the value they perceive, and as stated before the core point is to balance expectations on products to maximize the value creation without losing profits.

Companies can choose how to interact with its customers with multiple relationship levels. The two opposite ones see as low profit margin companies with basic interactions with clients, while companies with high income customers try to keep good customer relations to keep high profitability.

There has been a shift in how companies market their products from mass marketing to marketing their products to fewer but loyal and selected customers who will continue purchasing a company's goods. This means that not every customer is trustworthy: by stating this companies may even want to get rid of customers who won't purchase again from them and keep customers with a great purchase power, willing to spend for the company's new products. As new clients from new business transactions arise, companies may have to undertake high expenditures to keep new customers. To keep track of customers, there is a classification scheme all about framing customers for a certain company. This scheme 's groups are strangers, butterflies, true friends and barnacles.

- Strangers: low profitability and low loyalty. What they search for is not what the company can offer them and it is wise not to try to invest in them for a potential return in terms of profitability.
- Butterflies: potentially profitable clients, but with low loyalty like strangers. Their needs can be satisfied by the company, but it is wise not to expect a lot from them. Trying to turn butterflies into potential loyal clients can be a hardship, so it is better to enjoy their presence momentarily and turn into good what they can offer.
- True friends: profitable clients with high loyalty. The given company can give them exactly what they want and puts effort into making them the best possible clients, to have them purchase frequently and tell other people how good the given company is.
- Barnacles: low profitable clients but very loyal. Their needs can be partially satisfied by the company, but the customers don't have what it takes to be turned into fully trustable.

2.5: Defining the role of marketing.

A given for companies is to find the most suitable plan for a stable growth by planning carefully their next moves after an in-depth consideration of their resources and objectives. This operation is called "Strategic Planning", which can be described as the process that helps business goals and resources in adapting to always changing opportunities. It can be of help when sudden changes arise so the company can take advantage of the new business situation.

But why do an organization exist? It must accomplish something to have a meaning. Therefore, organizations state their mission. It can be why their business exists, who can be considered a customer for them and what must be carefully planned for sales to skyrocket? So, "mission statements" are created, to help customers in having a more precise idea of what they intend to purchase. The thing companies need to focus on is not a myopically defined mission: the mission's basic need is to

be market oriented and help in satisfying customer needs. As Kotler and Armstrong write: “Products and technologies eventually become outdated, but basic market needs may last forever”.

Mission statements should point out the strengths of a company and motivate customers to purchase their products, while not having implicitly stated that their primary mission is to make a profit from customers. In another way, mission statements should make customers their primary and most important point, in creating value and meaningful experiences for them. The marketing department must develop strategies that help companies in creating campaigns to support companies’ objectives using an efficient marketing strategy.

2.6: Marketing strategy and marketing mix.

Nowadays customers are the focus of companies, with customer satisfaction and the creation of profitable relationship as a consequence of their customer care. To create all of this, a smart marketing strategy is needed. A marketing strategy can be defined as how the company wants to create satisfaction and profitable relationships by choosing which market segments are to serve and how to serve those. Identifying the complete aspects of the market and choosing carefully which market segment will be the best for creating good relationships (and value). With the guidance of the marketing strategy, companies will design the integrated marketing mix, composed of four factors: Product, Price, Place, Promotion, which concepts have already been explained.

To convince customers in purchasing their products, companies have to comprehend the environment they live in and what is desired by customers. Since customers have various desired and there is not a fixed category of consumers because there are too many factors that influence wants and needs, the market must be sized up into more suitable segments to serve. Analyzing the various segments can help in understanding which segment can be the most profitable, and this process is called market segmentation. A given sector’s members usually have similar ways to reach out to marketing strategies, and companies should create strategies tailored to fit in the segment’s needs.

After defining the segments to serve, it is essential to evaluate how a segment appeals to the company. If a segment is suitable for providing to the company a profitable amount of customer value, it’s perfect for that company. Limited resources make companies target segments in which they are more than certain of having a return in terms of customer value and profit. If a business proves its model to be successful, adding more segments can be done.

Defining a marketing segment is important, but choosing which position is the best to compete with other products is very important as well. Choosing how to differentiate a product is a key matter for the marketing strategy: product which are perceived like similar competitors won’t be purchased by consumers. That’s why positioning a product is essential to make it more appealing and desirable to customers and in their opinions. A good positioning can lead to a competitive advantage, maybe

with the promise of the best value compared to competitors. To provide this value, differentiation is necessary for promising some added value. To promote a product for its key features communications can give a tremendous help in positioning a product in the desired way.

2.7: Development of an integrated marketing mix

As the marketing plan approaches its realization, it must be chosen how to act to promote a certain product and which programs, or strategies are suitable for gaining the best profit. These are called marketing mix: tools used in marketing campaigns for making their desired target respond in the way wanted to create customer value and profit. There are a lot of different possibilities, grouped into four groups, the aforementioned four Ps.

Marketing programs should use carefully the four Ps to deliver customer value and by doing that achieving company's sales objectives. As customers are interested not only in the purchase but also to the total cost implied with a certain product, two-way communication between consumers and producers is important for satisfied customers.

For the marketing effort to be manageable, control is necessary, for brands, divisions, and single products. It starts with a marketing analysis about the company's current state. SWOT Analysis is a type of analysis made of four steps: Strengths (SWOT's S), Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Its overall purpose is to attract opportunities by using company's strength, while putting effort to overcome potential weaknesses or threats.

Marketing must also be planned for evaluating correctly which marketing tools are the most efficient in a given environment, tailored to match the strategic plans of the company. Summarizing what is currently happening in the environment and presenting a SWOT Analysis is the first step. With the outline of how to target a specific market and how to position a certain product, the marketing strategy defines the means for a company to create value for customers.

2.8: The Marketing environment

To fully understand how marketing can operate to create profitable relations, the marketing department need to be aware of the trends in their target market and seek for opportunities. Collecting information is fundamental for better campaigns which can lead to a competitive advantage. The environment must be carefully analyzed for meeting consumer needs and possible threats.

2.8.1: Microenvironment:

In the marketing microenvironment the main actors are those who affect the company's ability to serve customers: company's other departments, suppliers, and other forces that can affect a company's value delivery network. Every function in a company must be customer oriented and have customer satisfaction as their main focus, as stated by eventual missions written by the top

management. Marketing department is the lead in showing everyone the top management's mission by creating campaigns tailored to envision that mission.

2.8.2: Suppliers

Suppliers have an important role as well since they provide for the company the "raw materials" for the company to create products and services. They are treated as partners in creating value for customers, as problems might happen at any time, like strikes and delays can occur at every moment. So, it becomes crucial to keep the best relation possible with suppliers in order not to have delays in production or any eventual problem that could arise from problems within the supply chain.

2.8.3: Marketing intermediaries

It can happen that marketing intermediaries such as resellers and marketing agencies help companies to promote their products and reach out to customers. These intermediaries help find potential consumers (resellers), manage stockings and their distribution to purchase destinations (Distribution firms) and give their professional opinion about how to effectively advertise a product for a better marketing campaign (marketing agencies). To deliver satisfaction to customers, a tight partnership between the companies that deliver value to customers is fundamental.

2.8.4: Competitors

It is not possible to overlook at potential competitors. Every company in a given market needs to create value for consumers to gain value back from consumers, while being receptive of the potential threats that may come from competitors, which can possibly gain a competitive advantage, because of their better understanding of consumers' needs and desires. What is important to companies is how they are perceived in consumers' eyes: a better perception helps in gaining a competitive advantage. There is not a precise marketing strategy which can work for every company, as resources aren't the same for every company. Considering factors such as a company 'size and its own position in a market helps gaining conscience of what is better to do for an improved position in consumers' perception.

2.8.5: Customers

Finally, customers are a part of the marketing microenvironment. Marketing's aim is to create profitable relations with customers. Customer markets can be targeted in some ways.

- Consumer market: buyers for personal consumption.
- Business market: buyers for producing goods with the purchased materials.
- Reseller market: their aim is to create value for themselves by reselling products purchased in advance.

- Government markets: governments purchase different kind of products and services to create services for public and help people in need.
- International markets: buyers located in different countries.

2.9: Macroenvironment

The macroenvironment is the ensemble of various forces outside the marketing's microenvironment and how they affect and make marketing strategy change to different scenarios .

- Demographic environment: demography must be clearly studied to understand how countries grow, which trends are becoming popular among who. Since the basis of a market is the people forming that market, analyzing the demographic environment can be of great help for effective marketing strategies.
- Economic environment: economy is the main force to influence consumers. Purchasing power and spending pattern are highly affected by changes in a country's economy.
- Natural environment: it concerns the resources needed by companies for manufacturing their products, and the marketing department should be conscious about how the situation mutates in certain periods, such as raw materials can face a shortage period or different kind of sources (such as renewable and nonrenewable sources) can or can not be available. Companies should focus on sustainability and shift their usual way of creating value by selling their products to a production model which is sustainable and aware of environmental problems.
- Technological environment: always evolving, new technologies have a high potential for being marketed as revolutionary and game changing in various fields.
- Political and social environment.
- Cultural environment.

2.9.1: How to respond to the environment

Environment can be seen by companies as an uncontrollable element. It needs to be studied and a careful organization to market products effectively for generating value and overcoming threats or eventual competitors. Other companies have a more active perception of the environment: this approach is often supported by strategies which are made to overcome uncertain environments by forcing themselves aggressively in a market.

What is important for an efficient marketing, is a fresh insight into consumers' daily life and hobbies to gain exclusive insights on which product could be their next purchase, and to put the company in a competitive advantage position. Insights are extremely helpful, but that's not the only thing needed. Managing insights is essential to understanding information gained, as customers may have no idea about why they want to buy a certain product. Information transformed into customer insights is needed to create value.

2.10: Marketing research

Companies need insights to choose which market is the best to enter or how to face a situation occurring in a certain market, and the research that happens by collecting and analyzing data about a given marketing situation is called marketing research. This activity is fundamental to the marketing development as it provides motivation and satisfaction of customers and can be a great help to see if their strategy about a different matter, as how pricing and promotion are perceived by clients.

One of the hardest steps to the marketing research is to define eventual problems in company's work until that moment and research objectives that can be of help for better understanding of the marketing scenario. There are three types of objectives useful for marketing research.

- Exploratory: gaining information and suggesting eventual hypothesis.
- Descriptive: explore market scenarios to define potential buyers for a certain product.
- Causal research: testing cause-effect trials such as pricing strategies.

2.10.1: Developing the research plan

After defining how problems and objectives, the research plan will be conducted by keeping in mind that objectives need to be transformed into information: when and how a product is purchased, which brand is the most popular and why, how much is a good price for the product, are all questions which need careful planning to be solved.

2.10.2: Customer relationship management

Once the information is ready and available, it must be analyzed again to think about possible insights about market and customers. Information is usually fragmented into different company databases: to avoid the problem companies make great use of customer relationship management. It manages all the information concerning customers in order to raise customer loyalty. Using this system companies can get to know their customers better and be able to provide them with better services available to them, all that it takes to grow profitable relationships.

2.11: Consumer behavior: how customers choose what to purchase and potential external influences

Everyone is a potential customer for a given product, and since people tend to vary a lot from country to country in terms of tastes, income, and age, it is possible to study about the "whys" someone buys something, but it must be kept in mind that human beings' brain doesn't work like a computer. Everyone's brain works in a different way, and everyone's mind responds to marketing efforts in a different way. So, how is possible to affect customers' decision-making process about a specific purchase?

2.11.1: Cultural factors affecting consumer behavior

Customers are affected by their upbringing: country and its proper culture and society, values and psychological factors must be considered when marketing a product in a country.

- Culture: thinking about the place someone was born in, in which way they were raised, and which values were the most important during someone's growth must be considered to properly market a product. Kotler and Armstrong here talk about American kids' values taught by American society, need for success and a strong individualism. While speaking about Japanese society, it can be described as a more collectivistic one such as stated in owlcation.com: *"The success of a single person is often shared with the people they work with, either be colleagues or team members"*. As can be seen in corporate culture, Japanese people can work for a company for decades and this can also lead to an eventual promotion . While in the US, since the Americans see individualism as a strong value, they can change workplace frequently if this implies a better social status and a possible promotion.

Keeping this in mind can help when marketing a product, as cultural influences can be different between countries. If a company chooses not to adjust their marketing campaign to the country they want to work with, marketing efforts can become inefficient or even failures.

- Subculture: a subculture can comprehend groups of people with a shared system of values based on different situations they live in, common experiences during life and so on.
- Social class: structure in a society with members sharing common values and behaviors. This factor is not defined by one single factor but comprehends more variable matters such as education and wealth. It is interesting in a marketing point of view because people of a determined social class may show similar behaviors when thinking about a purchase that is to be done.

2.11.2: Social factors

Consumers are heavily influenced by the environment they live in. family, status and groups easily lead consumers to purchasing a given product instead of another one.

- Groups and networks: smaller groups have a strong influence on its members, and the figures of opinion leaders – people from a group with strong influence on other people from a given group- can affect by far how a product is perceived by recommending it or talking in a poor way about it. Some can even become "brand ambassadors" (as in the case of the products I will disclosure in the next chapters). Social networks can have a great impact on how products are seen by customers: posting videos on platforms such as YouTube or Instagram can really help in creating an effective marketing campaign for illustrating the product's innovative features.
- Age, economic situation, and lifestyle: a certain product can have different marketing ideas for being more appealing to different age groups. Marketing campaigns can also have as their own target only a specific age group. Another aspect of marketing is closely related to a

person's economic situation and their income: if a product is too expensive for a given income, companies will have to redesign and reprice what they offer to the public to be appealing again.

- Lifestyle is also a matter to be considered when creating a marketing campaign. As someone's lifestyle is, as described by Kotler and Armstrong, "a person's whole pattern of acting and interacting in the world", marketing operations must be aware of people's likings and daily life in order to make product which have the best chance to be purchased by customers.

2.11.3: Psychological factors

Psychological factors have a grand role as well, and it's possible to distinguish four factors which play an important role in why customers choose to purchase something.

- **Motivation:** a desire is what drives people to search for satisfaction, and there may be a lot of reasons behind this desire, which can also be unconscious to customers. So, the motivation of a purchase is to be researched in a consumer's subconscious to find out why they wanted to do such purchase. Abraham Maslow, a psychologist, explains that according to his theory there is a so called hierarchy of needs, which as long as a need is satisfied, humans try to satisfy some higher needs: after having basic needs like hunger or protection and developing a sense of belonging to something, the next need that humans feel important will need to be satisfied³⁴.
- **Perception:** humans receive information in the same ways by using our senses, but not everyone puts information together in the same way. Instead, every single person has its own way to assemble information to understand external stimuli. This factor is called perception: how people think about received inputs to create their meaningful vision of the world.
- **Learning:** by different facts, human learning is tightly connected to human behavior. Doing an action that brings satisfaction to the person who did it, may lead to that person repeating that action to feel better again. It can happen with purchases as well: someone happy about a purchase will repeat it again, because they have learned that a certain product can bring satisfaction to them.
- **Beliefs and attitudes:** aspects which can influence how customers perceive a certain purchase, affecting buying behavior. Beliefs can be ideas and thoughts created by customers through their life experiences, which are interesting to marketing departments which have as their target the eventual correction of false or misleading beliefs spread through consumers. Attitudes are the singular person's attitude about a given topic, which can be tastes in whatever field, likings for politics party and so on. While beliefs can be proven wrong by advertising

³⁴ Schütte Hellmut, Ciarlante Deanna, (1998). Consumer Behaviour in Asia. Hampshire Londra: MacMillan Press.

and marketing, attitudes are not the easiest thing to change: instead of trying to change someone's attitudes, marketing should try to make products which can be perceived as something which is coherent to the target audience's attitudes.

2.11.4: Buying decision behavior

As a purchase gets expensive, the more consumers are involved into it, since a lot of time can be invested into carefully planning a purchase. there are several buying behaviors that can be categorized keeping in mind the involvement of customers.

- Complex buying behavior: customers fit into this category when purchasing something with differences among multiple brands, usually with expensive products. Consumers have to categorize products and get to the conclusion about an eventual fit into what they believe the product will be capable of: satisfying the customer. The role of marketing here is to evaluate how consumers think and be able to highlight product's key features while describing those as something which cannot be found in other brands. It must also instruct salespeople and help them being more persuasive to help customers into choosing their product.
- Dissonance-Reducing behavior: Similar to what happens in complex buying behavior, consumers are involved in the purchase since it's an expensive one but don't see many different points in the considered brands. This behavior can lead to a quick choice based on convenience or the product which seems the best one according to their beliefs or attitudes but aren't much involved in the purchase: one product is almost the same as another one. After a purchase, customers may be dissatisfied about the product or prefer another product which they didn't purchase, even if it was considered for the purchase. here the role of marketing is to make clients feel satisfied about their purchase by explaining the good features of their product.
- Habitual buying behavior: usually this behavior shows in normally purchased products, which don't have enormous differences among the various brands. Customers don't even seek information about brands, since they are already familiar with the brands they usually see. Here there is no active choice like it could happen in the already described behaviors, and even after the purchase has been concluded there won't be any regret or feeling about it. Because this type of products has little difference from brand to brand, marketing department can influence customers by using price related promotions or try to give products various features which could make it more recognizable.
- Variety-seeking behavior: in this case the products studied are usually low-cost but the various brands' key features are well perceived by customers, which can switch from brand to brand. Customers evaluate a lot their purchases but may choose different brands the next time they

have to choose not because they didn't feel satisfied enough to repeat the purchase, just to try out different brands.

2.11.5: Buyer decision process

Since buyers don't have one and one only buying pattern, it can be described as a sequence of stages (which can be skipped in routine cases such as low-cost products purchased frequently) of how consumers can be influenced, and which ideas and thoughts can come out when facing a new purchase.

- Recognition of a problem: internal or external stimuli may lead to a point which someone's desire can be high enough to be considered as something urgent, a drive. What is the problem in exam and how it can be tackled is the mission of the marketing department.
- Information Search: searching for an information regarding a product can be obtained through several sources which influence consumer behavior. A good amount of information can be obtained by commercial sources which have the task of showing the best features to consumers, to make them interested in pursuing the purchase of the product. Everything is done to raise awareness about a given product.
- Evaluation of alternatives: products with different features are displayed all together, and consumers need to make a choice about which brand to purchase. There may be zero to little consideration about which brand they are choosing: there is no fixed pattern that may lead a customer to purchase a product instead its competitor.
- Purchase decision: after choosing the most suitable brand for consumer's likings and tastes, two factors can be shown. One is other people's attitudes regarding a certain product, which can interfere with the buying decision if their opinion doesn't match consumer's one. The second one is an unexpected situation, which can change consumer's mind about a different purchase and lead them not to purchase the target product.

2.11.6: Postpurchase behavior

After a purchase, there are two possible outcomes: satisfaction or dissatisfaction. It all lies in expectations and expected performance. A product which can outstand expectations will be perceived as a good one, while some other product with little to no perceived and improved features will be perceived as unsatisfying for the customer.

It can happen that even satisfied customers can feel that there is an implicit compromise in their purchase: benefits can still be felt but there may be regret about a product that they didn't ultimately choose and the benefits apported by that product. To help customers feel great and satisfied, companies' marketing department need to develop ways to increase customer satisfaction, so customers will be satisfied with their purchases and repeat such purchase.

While happy and satisfied customers will repeat their doings, unhappy customers may spread

bad voices about a company's products and services. The most problematic thing is that this kind of complains aren't directly referred to companies: this is the reason why companies should create ways for unsatisfied customers to speak their voice so companies can further improve their products.

2.12: Marketing segmentation

It is not a little-known fact that population has risen to a level (7,89 billion on 2021 as stated in the world bank site) that sees consumers become more and more picky with desires, needs and consumer behavior. It must be also stated that companies have the characteristic of being able to serve in different ways the numerous markets they may want as their target: mass marketing is not working nowadays because of consumer's taste which can be different from country to country, so marketing efforts have been converted into targeting few segments with products created only for the target segment. This approach is called marketing segmentation. Analyzing the market to slip it into smaller sections for a better understanding of its characteristics, and then creating a program made only for one segment, to make the product more appealing for that segment's consumers.

While keeping track of consumers' behavior in all the interesting segments, companies can choose the most interesting or profitable segments to penetrate and how to do so. Marketing departments can differentiate their marketing efforts to create multiple strategies fit for every attractive segment for the company while giving its product a well-constructed image to customers, for a better positioning: positioning products in a superior way than competitors can help when customers must choose a product to purchase.

A given market can be segmented in many ways upon the analysis of different features of it.

- **Geographic:** companies can split up a market by analyzing it by a geographical point of view. By studying the different areas of a country it's possible to understand which features are important for different regions or cities, localizing the products for being attractive for people living in a certain area.
- **Demographic:** customers don't have all the same age or job. Segmenting an area by demographic matters can give a better idea of the various data needed. Age and generation (such as baby boomers, generation X or millennials) can give a lot of information about consumer's likings and buying behavior.
- **Psychographic:** a person's lifestyle is heavily influenced by its choices when purchasing a product. A tailored marketing program can be tailored to make customers feel like a product fits their lifestyle.
- **Behavioral:** this segmentation splits up customers by analyzing how they react to a given product. How much they will use it and in which occasion, which benefits will a product grant

to customers and how a customer will be perceived by other people is what this segment studies.

Segmentation can not be limited to a single study method, and companies can be helped by a better way of segmenting markets by choosing which aspects to consider when analyzing a market, to create a more defined segment while focusing on customers of that segment's desires.

To be effective, segmentation must be done keeping in mind that it needs a good planning and some characteristics that makes it clear and understandable for the marketing department.

- **Measurable:** the segment's wealth and by instance, its purchasing power is measurable. How many consumers can be included in the segments and how is essential for a good marketing.
- **Accessible:** the consumers of a determined segment can be efficiently served.
- **Substantial:** the given segment should be grand enough to have a good profit over it, with many consumers with similar consumer behavior so the can be served all in the same way.
- **Differentiable:** based on how consumers of a segment respond, it can be split up in other less big segments.
- **Actionable:** marketing program should keep in mind a company's possible efforts to make a marketing campaign effective and realizable.

Segments need a meticulous analysis in terms of size and hypothetical growth, attractiveness, and company's actual resources and fulfillable objectives. Keeping track of eventual competitors and potential substitutes is a key activity of the analysis.

While keeping an eye on the factors that can make a company choose to penetrate a segment, according to disponsible resources, companies need a targeting strategy fit for the segment. Efforts to create a good strategy are crucial here: is it the best to differentiate a product to make different key features stand out or concentrate on a single product?

Tastes of consumers also have a strong influence on this aspect of the marketing strategy. To detect what consumers like the most, looking at competitors' strategy becomes very important to choose which marketing strategy suits a product the best. Marketing must be done in the right way to gain profitable relations, but it must be socially responsible as well, by targeting customers in a way that explains benefits in the best possible way. Targeting customers' needs a well-done study of how to target people for company's own benefit but consumer's profit as well.

Differentiation is needed for products to work well in the market. Companies need to create a product with clear and distinctive features so that consumers will be aware of a product and categorize it in their minds. This process needs to be as more appealing to customers as possible, so that once categorized the product in their minds, this ideal position may lead them to purchase the goods. An efficient marketing mix is what companies need to plan for creating an image in consumer's mind

that their product is the one which can give consumers the benefit they search for. To do this, it must be carefully planned a differentiation and positioning strategy.

The first step for this strategy is to define how a product can be seen as better than its competitor. To have a better position and to gain competitive advantage, companies need to give their products some added value than competitors' products: by doing this companies need tailored slogans to highlight new features that can give more value to customers. By differentiating itself a company can choose some ways to be more appealing to customers by showing their values along their new products.

- Product differentiation: showing their best product's characteristics and how the key features will be more valuable to customers.
- Service differentiation: better services to enrich the overall experience of what was purchased by customers.
- Channel differentiation: based on how a company's channels work, it becomes possible to deliver the best possible experience to customers.
- Image differentiation: by using symbols, customers can be frequently reminded of what a company is known for and can purchase products just because the products belong to that symbol.

To better differentiate a product, companies need to think about how to differentiate it: every product has a set of features that can be promoted, but only the most prominent ones can be showed to customers to be seen as more appealing. Differences can be promoted by:

- Importance: if a difference can generate more value than competitor's product, it is better to establish it by making it appealing.
- Distinctiveness: how a feature can be offered by a company in a better way than competitors.
- Superior: obtaining the wanted effect by purchasing competitors' product can be perceived as almost impossible, while buying the given product obtaining what customers want can be easily done.
- Communicable: this key feature is clearly perceived.
- Preemptive: it can be difficult to copy new features by competitors.
- Affordable: even if a product with more value has a higher price, since the perceived value is higher consumers can pay more for a better value.
- Profitable: by introducing a new key feature, the company can gain profit over it.

After the differentiation project, positioning a product is the next step in the marketing strategy. By stating the target customer and their needs, the company offers a different way of doing the target's

routine. Positioning a product in a category clearly makes it share homogeneous features: it comes to the brand to highlight the superior position of the product.

To deliver a product's desired position, companies have to create a network that can deliver the position to customers by creating an excellent service around the product and the experience they want to offer. Building a position needs efforts and consistency to maintain it, while closely monitoring customers to adapt to uncertainty that may arise in the marketing environment.

2.13: Definition of the product

What can be defined as a product? Basically, whatever that has a value and is offered in a market can be a product. Services, which are intangible and don't give to buyers the ownership of a material possession, are products as well. Companies can choose to offer both products and services: new ways to create value demand new ways to deliver experiences to customers.

Three levels of product or services can be defined, with each level giving the product/service more value for customers.

- Core customer value: the basic definition of the purchased product. It is specifically tailored to solve a need, sought by customers. Marketing departments need to identify what is the desire that could lead consumers to purchase a product.
- Actual product: everything needed to create a product with distinguished features, a brand, and a peculiar design. Creating a product with a well-rounded set of features helps in being more competitive.
- Augmented product: additional benefits given to customers after purchasing a product.

The most important thing is to grasp what consumers need to satisfy a desire, then focus on creating more value around this purchase to make customers happy and satisfied about their purchase, even if there are problems with their purchase.

2.13.1: Product classification

Products can be classified into consumer products and industrial products, but in this dissertation, I will explain only consumer products. Experiences can be defined as products as well, as long as an experience can have a tailored-made marketing strategy.

Consumer products are defined as what is purchased by final consumers, intended for personal consumption. The classification made about consumer products is made upon the frequency of the purchase, i.e., how many times a person purchases that kind of goods. Marketing strategies need to be customized based on this classification.

- Convenience products: consumers buy this type of products with little comparison and low effort, because of price or features of the product. Usually, these products are located in many

places and the plan is to make those products always available for customers when a certain need arises.

- Shopping products: products which are sporadically purchased. Consumers in this kind of purchases try to gain a lot on information about a product they want to buy, comparing with similar products to have more insights and choosing the product which suits them better. Products of this category have few places in which they are available, but because of this the customer support in choosing the right product and post-purchase support is better.
- Specialty products: this kind of products have non imitable features which are unique only to that specific product or service. Customers here don't even need to compare products, as their uniqueness is what makes customers interested in it.
- Unsought products: products which aren't known to customers, or not even considered when a certain need arise. Advertising is the way in which this category gets known to most of the customers.

It is important to make people aware of how it is possible to sponsor a certain product or campaign by using celebrities as well: by person marketing people can see professionals in their field as ambassadors.

2.13.2: Product and service decisions

For a product to be efficiently promoted and perceived by customers as the best in a given field, there are some features which must be studied to enhance the performances of a product.

- Quality: it has a direct relationship with satisfaction of customers. It can also be viewed as quality of creating, keeping, and maintaining a good link with satisfied customers. When speaking of quality, level of the quality is the feature directly connected to how a product will perform and position in the target market. Consistency of quality means that products shall be performant enough to have no defects and consistent in what they promise to customers.
- Features: by creating new features for a product, companies can compete effectively. A desired feature can have a great impact on how companies interact with customers when delivering satisfaction.
- Style and design: as the style is a mere description of how a product appears, the design has a deeper meaning. Design is what creates a product's shape and utility, and by adding a useful design companies can satisfy customers by making their product easy to use.

Companies need to make their products stand out and to be more attractive. A brand is something that catches the eye of consumers by using a specific term to make a product appealing, and it can also position a product in the mind of consumers. As it can add value to products and services, brands are fundamental for companies. For attentive customers, by purchasing the same

brand they expect a certain implied level of satisfaction. Since it tells customer the story of the company, a brand is always associated to a story behind its product.

2.13.3: Packaging

A product to finally be completed needs a packaging as well. Packaging can be used for marketing purposes as well: by creating an innovative one companies can gain an advantage over competitors and it can be easily recognizable if it has some key features that make it outstanding. As will be disclosed in the next chapters, the “Asahi Nama Jokki Kan” has a peculiar packaging, that will be the focus of the chapter dedicated to this innovative can.

To support packaging and brands, labels are important as well. A good labelling operation can help in boosting sales as well by making a product more attractive because of the label itself. An operation of identifying the label is needed to make it more interesting to customers.

2.13.4. How to efficiently brand a company

Brands are way more than a made-up term or name. It is a link between the company and consumers, and it also represents consumer’s feelings concerning a product. Strong brands have high brand equity: the so-called potential to attract customers based on the brand’s name. Based on how much a brand is known to consumers, their perception is almost biased on their knowledge of the brand, and consumers’ responses can be easily predicted by it: creating tailor made brand experience is important to the company as customers can feel a deep connection with it. Strong brands obtain a competitive advantage, as having a high level of loyalty by consumers.

- Positioning: the company needs its brand to be clearly perceived by consumers. By a right perception, it can be categorized in the right way in the target’s mind. Choosing to stress on the right attributes of products, with a focus on the added benefits or values is what that must be done for the best positioning of the brand. Creating experiences is what companies seek for to gain back profit and customer satisfaction.
- Name selection: the name chosen for a brand should make customers think about the benefits offered by a product, and an easy way to make it stand out to customers when they’re purchasing goods. A brand can be extendable as well by making it sell more than its original products.
- Sponsorship: the brand needs to be launched as a brand, sponsored by the main company. In the case studies that will be analyzed later, the products are part of manufacturer’s brand.

2.13.5: Developing a brand

To develop a brand, there are four ways companies have when promoting and creating different products.

- Line extension: adding to the existing product new features like size and flavor.
- Brand extension: extend the already existing name to different categories, adding new products which weren't part of the main line. Useful for gaining acceptance faster and recognition because part of the most known brand.
- Multibrands: create different brands under the same company which sell the same category of products.
- New brands: when entering a new target market or when the management thinks that there is a dispersion of brand power, it may be appropriate to create a new brand with a different target market.

2.13.6: Managing brands

To manage a brand efficiently, companies always need to communicate their positioning through advertising: their aim is to create brand loyalty. Creating brand loyalty isn't enough, though. The major aim to accomplish for companies is the enhancement of brand experience. Customers are always receiving stimuli about companies with advertising, but that alone isn't sufficient for convincing potential customers. Customers' personal experiences regarding the brand, listening to other people talking about a certain brand and looking on the net about products: everything is important to enhance the customer experience. This is the reason why a periodical round-up about company's overall positioning is the best way to always be the best in the target market a company wants to serve, choosing various ways to reach more customers by the analysis of what is more appealing to customers.³⁵

2.14: Developing new products

With the term "New Product", Kotler and Armstrong refer to implementations, modifications and new brands developed in collaboration with the R&D Department. New products bring variety and potential satisfaction to customers while being new income and growth sources for companies. Those products can also become the touch point for new customers with the company. It can happen that bringing innovation by launching new products which have a bad position in the market or have been poorly researched and developed, companies can face high costs and wild competition.

2.14.1: Development process

By searching for innovative ideas, companies start their research. This process requires lot of time, and a lot of sources are needed to receive more than one input. A lot of ideas and input can come from external sources as well, like customers and suppliers: they can give ideas on how new products regarding materials and concepts. Competitors have their role as well in this process: by

³⁵ Making Japanese tea a big business: The transformation of ITO EN since the 1960s, Qing Xia and Pierre-Yves Donzé. Published on SHASHI, The journal of Japanese Business and company history Vol. 7 (2022). Consulted on 20 January 2023.

analyzing their sales data and their products it is possible to come up with new ideas to compete with them. The most precious concepts ideas are given from customers though. Analysis of their complaints and questions is what drives companies to create and innovate more to solve customers' problems.

2.14.1: Idea screening and testing

This process wraps up the research for new ideas by choosing the most suitable ideas to develop or to further study while dropping bad ideas which won't lead to a profit. As the ideas pass this screening those are formally written for the executives to read. The information needed is about which target market will the product penetrate, eventual competitors and how this product will bring more value to customers. Concepts can be turned into projects which can be attractive for customers. There is a substantial difference between the potential products, potential product ideas and product image.

- The potential product is the attractive idea which was chosen among the others to be developed and if the R&D succeeds in creating a sufficiently satisfying product, it can be offered in the target market.
- The product idea is a detailed summary of what features will the potential product have, for bringing more customer value.
- The product image is how the new product will be perceived by customers.

The initial concept for a product must be carefully designed to attract customers and eventually lead them to the final purchase of the potential good(s). Choosing the best concept for a product needs this concept to be attractive yet specific enough to illustrate to customers all the key features the company wants to promote.

2.14.2: Marketing strategy development

Here starts the first steps for the marketing strategy, which here is composed by three parts.

- Overall description of the objective for a medium-length period in terms of desired market, sales while summarizing what to expect from potential customers in terms of units sold and expected profit.
- Outlining more technical matters such as price and marketing budget. Adding new accessory features to the product while focusing on the key features of the product which can give more customer value and customer satisfaction as well.
- Planning the long period' sales and desired profit, while considering the possible marketing strategy. Raising prices if needed while improving the features of the product. Reducing the marketing research's budget if needed.

After choosing which product to develop, companies analyze what it takes in terms of sales and profits to conclude if the new product is profitable and matches the company's business objectives. After the approval of the matching of costs, the production development starts. For a better analysis of costs and revenues companies can calculate the needed amount of sales for being more aware of how many units need to be sold to calculate loss and eventual risks.

Development needs enormous investments to create satisfying prototypes which can entertain customers: companies seek for fast production with limited expenses. Prototypes need rigorous testing to find out if the new features are efficient and will create customer value. Marketing tests are the next step. By using realistic settings of potential target market, the entire strategy related to a product can be tested. A lot of time is needed, and in this time, competitors may gain a threatening advantage, as tests require much time and expenses as well. Simulations can also be used: simulations with various environments can help determine the response of consumers regarding a certain product.

The final step after the tests is product, commercialization. In the first year the company will have to face soaring costs for effective advertising. Crucial matters for launching new products are timing and scale, which means where the company desires to launch the product, either it be the whole national market or a limited scale market.

2.14.3: Management of the development

For a product to be effective, it must be customer oriented for it to be more appealing to customers. There are several ways in which a product is developed, which are listed below.

- Customer centered development: the analysis begins with the premise of creating a customer oriented and centered product. The way for a product to be successful is the one which grants customers more customer satisfaction, that's why analyzing what customers desire and want from a product is essential. This step has its core focus in finding original ways to solve problems while generating more satisfied customers. Products which have a high problem-solving value while maintaining a good grade of differentiation from other goods in the market are the most successful ones. Also, trying to make customers part of the process by engaging them in the innovation process can generate better incomes for the company.
- Team based development: instead of using the sequential way of developing a product (departments of the company working individually to create the finished product one with no communication between the different departments) which is surely effective but long enough to lose a potential advantage against competitors, by creating a team made of people from different departments of the company it become possible to shorten the time for manufacturing a product increasing the team's effectiveness.

- Systematic development: this kind of development system has a continuously running innovation management which has the task to gather information on new products. This system can help the company in being perceived as innovative, encouraging the use of cutting-edge technology for creating new products.
- Development of new products in hard times: no matter how the situation for the company might be bad, companies need to continuously innovate in order to possible growth opportunities.

2.14.4: Product life-cycle strategies

The aim of launching a product for the company is to obtain back the expenses for launching it. There is a five-step process, the product life-cycle which shows the normal steps a product metaphorically does from the development of it until its decline.

- Development: the development of a product starts with new concepts. During this step, investments skyrocket while there are no sales for the product.
- Introduction: sales have moderated growth while the product appears in the market. There are no profits as the expenses for its development had an enormous impact.
- Growth: the product starts to get recognized on the market, sales are high, and the company is starting to gain a profit from the product.
- Maturity: sales are stagnating, as potential consumers have already purchased the goods. Marketing strategies become necessary to protect sales from the rise of competitors.
- Decline: sales decrease and profits are descending.

In any way, the life cycle can be applied to describe the processes guiding product development and target markets' way of functioning, as well as being useful to the development of marketing strategies for each step of it. Since this theory is what causes market strategies, companies' marketing department's mission is to go against the five steps of this cycle in order to help products to make them trend again by making those products grow again.

To launch a product, it takes a lot of time: there will be no profits as the expenses for promoting and making the product attractive for customers. Launching a product need lots of planning and the best possible positioning is needed to gain profits back. When going through the last stages of the life cycle of a product, fresh strategies to keep the position in the market are what a company needs not to lose profits.

Growing sales makes a product enter in the growth stage. This stage sees product sales rise: customers will repeat their purchases and if potential new customers are sure about the features of a product because of what they heard from other people, they may become new customers. By watching the profits made by a company, potential competitors will try to enter the target market: companies

will have to face them with strategies apt to keep its position by differentiating their products and improving overall quality.

Entering the maturity stage, sales will eventually grow slowly. Since this stage has a longer duration, marketing departments need advanced strategies to keep up with competition. Eventual budget will be allocated to the R&D department for more research on how to increase performances of their products, which will cause less profits. Companies here have the possibility to adjust their target market by searching for possible new customers in different market segments, along with increasing consume. Through new features and better performances, potential customers will be attracted by the renewed product and purchase it for the first time.

Leading to the decline stage, the reasons may lie in strong competition or variations in tastes of consumers, and even new technologies can make products enter in the decline stage. Companies need to be aware of the costs of products with poor performance which can lead to less profit and less time to dedicate to more innovative or better performing products. There may be problems with customers as well: seeing companies willing to sell outdated products can be problematic, and potential customers won't purchase what companies offer in the market. With the review of current sales and performances, companies can choose to keep their products trying to give them new features and different positioning than before, or drop those products for making more profits, focusing in their products which are more attractive to customers.

2.15: communicating customer value

By mixing and matching various tools for a more persuasive communication, companies create their own marketing communication mix. The basic elements for promoting goods are the following:

- Advertising: sponsors create paid campaigns act to show products to potential customers in a nonpersonal way. Uses internet and printed mass-media.
- Sales promotion: companies make use of incentives (which are usually short-term) to inspire customers in purchasing the promoted goods. Makes use of demonstrations to show the key features of a product.
- Personal selling: the principal aim of the sales department is to develop and carefully shape customer relationships, while selling their products.
- Public relations: as the main objective of this tool, there is the development of favorable relations with customers, creating the best image possible for the company. It also must deal with possible bad rumors which may spread within potential target markets. There may be events with the purpose to show the new products.

- Direct marketing: creating profitable relationships with few chosen customers and gaining precious insights through responses by the targeted clients.

All the components of the communicative process need coordination to enhance even more the product, making careful planning about the looks of a product in terms of design, dimension, and places in which the product is available.

2.15.1: Integrated marketing communications

As we live in times of non-stop changes, the advertising models and techniques need to be up to date to reach more customers as possible: this means that communication must adapt to how the communication scenario is changing.

Consumers have more access to different mass-media at a single time and can be aware of a product's benefits and potential losses regarding a product, without having to rely on what marketing departments tell. There is more communicative power as well, as they can share opinions and doubts with other customers. Even the strategies about a tailored marketing are changing. Companies don't rely anymore on mass marketing but are trying to build better relationships with small-scaled markets and their customers. Moreover, because of new ways to communicate due to the technological process of the last years, there have been changes in how companies communicate their marketing programs to customers. By using new ways to communicate, the marketing department of companies need to be ready to develop new models for better communication with potential customers.

Overwhelmingly diffused mass media like television and papers still have a dominant role but it is beginning to fade away to give more space to media which are aggressively targeting less broad segments: the operation is called narrowcasting, which is the contrary of the broadcasting done by companies.

Passing more time connected to media such as internet and less time watching television or reading papers will also lead to unsustainable costs for companies which usually spend large amounts for their television marketing or advertising on printed paper. However, the advertising expenses for printed paper and television are still very high. To obtain more, companies should use mixes made of blends between new and more traditional media .

2.15.2: Need for integrated marketing communication

Because of the multitude of media customers have access to, sometimes it may happen that the information earned through various media can affect how consumers view a certain company: without a coherent message, the information given by firms' different media can be confusing to customers because there is a lack of communication channel integration. Since information are created not by a single part of the firm but come from various parts of it and maybe even external sources (like how it can happen for advertising which can use agencies).

Nowadays for gaining more profit and better customer relationships, companies rely on the integrated marketing communication concept. This concept is useful as it can give customers a defined and distinctive content about the company. Searching for liaisons between customer and the brand, it is possible to convey specific information, with the goal to create in consumers' mind a positive image by showing how companies can deliver satisfaction or creating profitable relationships. Coordination is essential in this process to help customers gain the best information about a company, for a better communicative power and by offering the best image possible, gaining more profit.

2.15.3: Communication process

To reach the desired outcome companies tailored programs are needed for the audience they want to target, avoiding myopic approaches such as trying to generate awareness about their brands in a fast way. It is crucial that every program has a defined target and that is customized to reach the objective of the program. By understanding which media are the most suitable for creating relations with customers, companies shall start by brainstorming the possible touch points with customers and plan how much influence the media will be to customers, choosing which media is more suitable for each step of the communication process.

For an effective communication, the different elements must be fully grasped and studied to make communication more understandable for potential customers.

- Sender: the party of the communication process broadcasting a message to potential customers.
- Encoding: process which explains how a message can be created to make it clear and understandable for customers.
- Message: what the sender wants to convey to customers.
- Media: means used to transmit messages.
- Decoding: part of the process in which the potential customer gives to the message received its own meaning.
- Receiver: the party of the communication process receiving a message from the sender.
- Response: how the receiver reacts after having decoded the message.
- Feedback: the reaction of the receiver is sent to the sender.
- Noise: hypothetical problems which may arise in the process, those may lead receivers to comprehending a wrong message than the original one.

Familiarity with the symbols received for the receiver is fundamental, and there is the necessity for senders to grasp information known to receivers to make the message as clear as possible.

2.15.3: Developing effective communication

To start thinking about how to promote a product, there is the need of an already defined audience to reach, either it be made of current or potential customers: to better grasp the audience's attention, the marketing department must understand how to communicate the message by adapting to the audience's likings and background.

Marketing a product needs a response from customers, in the majority of cases the desired one is the purchase of the goods. To make purchases happen, there is a need to understand the response of customers regarding a product, acting as guides to the final step, the purchase. to finally complete a purchase, customers need to make their way by setting foot in the six steps of the buyer-reading process: stages created to strengthen the will of consumers to purchase a product.

- Awareness: customers know that the product can be purchased.
- Knowledge: by advertising and word of mouth, customers learn more about the product.
- Liking: since the product possesses some interesting or attractive features, customers are inclined to purchase it.
- Preference: when in doubt about a purchase between the product and a similar one, customers will be prone to purchase the product of their likings.
- Conviction: assuming that the product customers are talking about suits them.
- Purchase.

Every communication activity related to the product has the role of informing customers about products which may be of their liking, with the promise of creating a better value than what competitors could currently provide by offering their products.

2.15.4: Message design

It must be designed with in mind the correct set of inputs which will stimulate consumers to purchase goods by following the AIDA model: Attention, Interest, Desire, Action.

While designing the content of the message, it must be chosen which appeal is the best to trigger the wanted action from customers, by selecting between rational appeal, emotional appeal, and moral appeal.

- Rational appeal triggers responses by focusing on the audience's own benefit in terms of performances or quality to be perceived as attractive.
- Emotional appeal is based on the emotions triggered by watching the advertising, which can range from joy to guilt. By relying on this kind of appeal brands can be seen as more appealing, and moreover using emotions as a form of persuasion for a purchase can profit companies:

consumers have mixed feelings regarding products, and by the overflow of emotions, consumers can be more inclined to purchase goods.

- Moral appeal makes consumers think about their idea of what is socially considered as “good” or “bad”.

2.15.5: Structure of the message

There are three possible structures that all have different features.

- First: Structure’s task is to delineate whether leave possible conclusions to be perceived and felt by customers, leaving freedom of interpretation, or clearly stating one.
- Second: thinking about the features of a product, the dilemma is when is opportune to show the best features of it.
- Third: using arguments to convince people in purchasing a product. One-sided disputes are all about the good features of a product, while two-sided disputes can show problematic points as well.

2.15.6: Message format

Due to the necessity of a satisfactory presentation to customers through media, a marketing department needs to choose the best tools such as colors, design of the advertising adapting it to the different media which will communicate the advertising to customers. Details such as body language in case of messages which are to be shown in person or by television must be carefully planned.

2.15.7: Choosing media

Channels of communication can be divided into personal and nonpersonal channels. Personal channels feature direct communication via different communications means, some of which are property of the company selling a product or mediated via people not part of the company: phone, internet or taking face to face. This kind of communication features feedback which are fairly important to choose the product customers may search for. By word of mouth or reviews on internet, opinions about a certain product can be spread quickly and with surprising effects. Nonpersonal channels feature media which don’t require contact with other people to be seen and used, such as billboards or television. By setting the mood for a purchase communicating certain features about products or services, marketing actions convey feelings related to the target of the promotion. Choosing the correct source for spreading the message is important too. A message needs to persuade customers while being also credible by them. A way in which messages can be seen as cool or more credible is the one which features celebrities or influencers to illustrate the merits of the product they’re sponsoring.

Once the message has been sent and customers had clear perceptions about it, a feedback can be produced basing on results of sales or other parameters.

2.15.8: Promotion mix shaping

To define the best tools apt to communicate certain features, companies need to have a clear idea of the effects given by the chosen marketing tools.

- Advertising is spread in vast areas at a budgeted cost for exposure. It can also be an indicator of how popular and accepted a company is, like if seeing advertising from a certain company could legitimate purchasing its goods. It is a very artistic way to express company's products giving them personality. The problem seen in advertising has to do with its feature: it is very impersonal, and potential customers may not feel the urge to pick up the message that advertising wants to convey.
- Personal selling is very helpful as it can help in making customers feel safe about a purchase, as there is a continuous personal interaction which is helpful for solving eventual problems that may come out.
- Sales promotion is a useful tool which by a various kind of deals can help boost sales.
- Public relations by hosting events can give products a fresh look and make it seem that it's a brand-new product instead of a targeted type of communication.
- Direct marketing's approach is a little bit different from the other approaches, as it has the aim to create a one-to-one customer relationship, targeting customers with messages addressed to specific segments of the target market.

2.15.9: Strategies

There are two possible strategies which can be chosen. Push strategy and pull strategy. Push strategy operates by showing products to company channels. If channels choose to display those products those will be promoted in retail stores, showing benefits and features to potential customers. Pull strategy focuses on advertising to target markets to make them demand the marketed products to retail stores.

To better balance goods and promotion strategies, what companies need to ponder is what kind of product they want to market and the target, while considering the actual product's life-cycle stage it is in. To build customer relationships the fundamental part for companies to do is make customers aware of the product they want to promote, by using public relations such as events or demonstrations along advertising in the first stages of the life cycle and in growth stage as well. When a product reaches its maturity personal selling becomes the most important tool, since customers already know the product and its features.

What companies need is to achieve a united and coherent communication way by having a company's different department work together to create a coordinated plan, while avoiding potential useless efforts.

2.16: Advertising

Advertising is adopted not only by companies targeting their products or brands but also from other categories of professionals in their field to raise awareness about their work field. Its main purpose is informative about products and services and persuasive, making products desirable to potential customers. The four main decisions to ponder are: advertising objects, budget, strategy, and evaluation of advertising campaigns.

2.16.1: Setting advertising objectives

Objectives need to refer to what has already been designated for the overall marketing campaign, to spread customer value and to set up profitable relationships. The need of objective is to notify customers, coax and evoke feelings into customers to help them make purchase decisions. Broadly operated when launching in target markets new products, with the aim to make it attractive for customers so that they will be interested and purchase it, usually with flamboyant and bold pieces of information to briefly explain new features and benefits about a certain product. Often companies rely on advertising's persuasiveness as new competitors enter the market, for creating more picky demand for better products with more or better benefits than competitors. Companies can also make use of advertising, comparative power to let consumers know, in explicit or implicit ways, the differences between their products and what competition offers. Advertising can have a reminder function as well: during products' mature stage it can be useful for customers as they will keep on thinking about the product as part of its target market.

The overall goal of advertising is the one to advise consumers about products and eventually lead them to the purchase action, by promoting short-term sales or in the majority of cases, enhancing customer relationships. By showing what company's best traits, advertising can shape customers' opinion on companies.

2.16.2: Advertising strategy

This process is composed by two main parts: creation of the advertising message and selection of the most suitable media to transmit the message. Creating a well-rounded advertising program needs a careful selection of how to deliver messages for creating more customer value and which is the most suitable media for displaying such messages.

2.16.3: Creation of the advertising message

Taking budget for granted, it is necessary to figure out how to effectively advertise products by creating a good way of communicating features and by being able to capture customers' attention during commercials. To be more effective commercials need to be entertaining for customers, while engaging them emotionally if an advertising wants to be impactful for customers. To be more entertaining the aim is to make it appealing for customers, which will be stimulated to watch more of

it, by making advertising look like a sequence of short videos about the same story.

The message must be planned too. Emphasis on the major benefits a product can grant to customers is a must for advertising, to make people aware of what a certain product can give them more than its competitors. To do so, a massive job of concept creation has the task of showing the message in the most understandable way for customers, maintaining the feeling of being the best alternative in between the market. The points a good advertising campaign shall be such: meaningful, putting emphasis on the most prominent features and benefits, believable, and distinctive.

2.16.4: Execution of the message

To make the advertisement perform in a better way, marketing department need to create it based on what is more appealing for the target audience's likings and preferences. Because of this aspect, there are many execution styles that can perform better in different contexts. To cite some:

- Slice of life: used to describe what normal people live their lives on a daily basis.
- Lifestyle: showing the uses of a product for people which makes use of it because of its function inside a daily routine, as it is healthy or useful for determined actions.
- Mood: creating feelings about a product for customers.
- Symbol: showing features that make the product unique.
- Testimonial: influencers or celebrities talking about the features of a product while showing benefits or how features of a product works.

To make advertising effective, companies need to shape those to be attractive and appealing for customers.

2.16.5: Selecting the most suitable media for advertising

Reach, frequency, impact: the choice of the media used relies on how this media will reach and by which frequency customers to achieve the objectives chosen by the company. With the term reach, marketing departments indicate the percentage of the target market which came into touch with the advertising. Frequency indicates the number of times people within the target market have been exposed to the advertising campaign, and media impact is a factor concerning the quality of the message: it must be carefully adapted to every single communication media it is going to be shown on.

2.16.6: Choosing media types

By choosing a media instead of other ones, it must be clear how advertisement will promote the goods in the specified media, and the potential benefits that promoting a product on a certain media can give. A good solution is to select and mix different media for a good mix for enhancing communicating power of the advertisement. Frequently analyzing each media of the mix's impact

can help in choosing which media to keep and which media to discard for inserting in the media mix a new, more performant media with better costs and better targeting potential.

Distinctive media and timing: among media types such as television and newspapers, companies can choose the television channel or magazine they think it can give more customer engagement and responses leading to the purchase. Evaluation of the audience is necessary to target specific advertisements in specific media. The right timing is essential too. The company needs decisions about peculiar advertising strategies for specific moments such as seasons or keep the same strategy during the whole year or create buzz around products with the aim of creating awareness which will be useful for sales in until new advertising will have the same action in the next season or period.

2.17: Public relations

Its function consists of a variety of activities concerning the image of a company and advertisement of products. Informing customers is their main target by the use of press related activities such as circulation of news by the use of media: the main purpose is to attract customers and help companies in creating and maintaining customer relationships.

This department's advertising role relies on creating news and events which can make customers interested in buying such products because of hypothetical demonstrations or stories created around the product depicting it as innovative and useful for the target audience. They also create material to communicate the benefits about the products they promote to spread news and gaining attention from customers.

2.18: Final comments

This chapter is to be intended as the start of my analysis on the following case studies, which will be focused on the marketing operated via internet by commercials featuring the products and the analysis of the internet webpages to highlight the common points of Japanese marketing campaigns, while pointing out key features of the products chosen for my case studies. The choice of broadly analyzing how a marketing campaign is done was taken upon explaining better the techniques used by marketing departments for a better understanding of the following chapters. How the analyzed campaigns give the products those are based on a better value will be the key point of the dissertation.

Chapter 3: Soft Drinks

3.1: Introduction

After outlining how a marketing strategy works, the following step is the commentary of a marketing strategy. The chosen products are three soft drinks which are a bit detached from what everyone recalls when talking about soft drinks. The products are the Pocari Sweat, Pocari Sweat's Ion Water, and the Yakult 1000.

The products have all the fil rouge of supplying the products with the chemicals it needs for a better performance³⁶, or for stress relief and better sleep³⁷. Hence, the light-motif of the chapter is possibility: how companies want consumers to perceive the aid given by the products in daily life is what will be analyzed for the three products.

3.2: Pocari Sweat

The first soft drink's commercials I would like to analyze is the "Pocari Sweat". This soft drink has become popular since its release in 1980³⁸ because of its function of supplying to the human body precious chemicals which have been expelled from the body by sweating. It is produced by the company "Otsuka pharmaceuticals"³⁹.

This drink's history has been summarized in a short video⁴⁰ published in their official website: the video is short and has a very childish style, but I think the aim of this video is to help people understand the true essence of the product as a supply drink, and it is also a good video for marketing the product.

The video starts with a man dressed in blue clothes (the typical color of Pocari Sweat) traveling from Japan to Mexico, to find inspiration for a new drink, but as he arrives in Mexico, the man needs to be hospitalized due to a lack of nutrients in his body, along a severe dehydration. While being hospitalized, the man exclaims:

「こんなとき、カラダが失った物をまとめて取れる飲み物があれば。。。」

(konna toki, karada ga ushinatta mono wo matomete toreru nominomo ga areba – if there was a drink that could supply what the body has lost...) (movie | ポカリスエット誕生のお話 2020, s.d.).

³⁶ Pocari Sweat, "SCENE", consulted on 12 December 2022. <https://pocarisweat.jp/scene/>

³⁷ Yakult 1000, consulted on 12 December 2022. <https://www.yakult.co.jp/yakult1000/>

³⁸ Pocari Sweat, ポカリスエットの歴史, consulted on 12 December 2022. <https://pocarisweat.jp/products/history/>

³⁹ Pocari Sweat, ポカリスエット 製品ストーリー, consulted on 12 December 2022. <https://www.otsuka.co.jp/two-core-businesses/stories/pocarisweat/>

⁴⁰ ポカリスエット web movie | ポカリスエット誕生のお話 2020, consulted on 18 January 2023. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=241BtNV7oIU>

By watching the fluids dripping inside the needle in his body, he had an idea:

「それはまるで、点滴液のような考え方で飲み物を作るという発想」
(sore ha, maru de, tentekieki no you na kangaekata de nomimono wo tsukuru toiu hassou – and just like that, the idea of creating a drink similar to the one in the drip)(movie | ポカリスエット誕生のお話 2020, s.d.). After this scene, some blue drops fall, like how it does in the drip, and the background music is again lively and the man is seen jumping and moving without any problem, and it appears on the screen a drawing of the Pocari Sweat bottle with the catchphrase:

「失われた水分と電解質をカラダにスムーズに補給」
(ushinawareta suibun to denkaishitsu wo karada ni sumuzu ni hokuyuu - smoothly supplying the body with water and electrolytes) (movie | ポカリスエット誕生のお話 2020, s.d.).

The video ends explaining that Pocari has been supporting customers' body for forty years, underlining that the product will go on supporting its customers in their daily life.



Figure 1: Pocari Sweat Lineup (Source: Pocari).

3.2.1: Analysis of the video: the blue color as the fil-rouge for creating the Pocari.

By paying attention to the background music of this short video, it is possible to underline five different moments in which the music changes. The first moment in which the man in blue travels to Mexico has a funky music, as if the trip to find inspiration for the Pocari was at the same time his job and an adventure. After he falls, as to say that he is ill and must be taken to the hospital, the music changes to a lower tone, to indicate that the moments spent at the hospital have slowed down his process of creating a new product. When he is sat on the bed with the drip linked to his arm, the music changes again, and in this moment, he realizes that the inspiration for the new drink is just in front of him: a drink that can make people feel better just by drinking it. The understanding of what he was aiming for, makes the music change again for a moment: the piano plays in synchro with the drops falling in the blue background, and here is the last change of music, which gets as lively as the first

music used in the video. Since the researcher got what he wanted, inspiration for the new drink, it is shown that he is feeling good by jumping on the screen like he did at the beginning of the video, and to symbolize that even if he had ups and downs in the creation of the drink, he successfully created what he wanted, a drink that can make other people feel better by supplying the nutrients useful for the human body.

It must also be noted that the whole video has references to the blue color, as it is the color of the label since its release in 1980. The main character is also wearing a blue suit. The blue indicates the name of the product, and even if as stated by the official website itself, the term “Pocari” doesn’t have a proper meaning, it resembles the whisper that a clear blue sky could make. This is the reason why everything has some links with the blue color: it is the color of the brand and also symbolizes a clear blue sky. In the next part the history of the product will explain everything related to the blue color.

3.2.2: Pocari Sweat’s history

Telling the story of how a product was created can help customers to perceive the brand as near to their value, and a good storytelling can help the product’s position in the target market.

At the very beginning of the development of the product, after debating the taste of a new product, a researcher (the protagonist of the video analyzed before) talked about his experience in Mexico, giving the decisive input to create the drink with the taste of the drip-feed⁴¹. As their idea was to wait a moment in which sport was having increased popularity, after three years the researchers started to develop it as, according to their story, jogging was becoming popular. The original idea for the drink was, rather than a sport drink, a soft drink that could help with the loss of water and electrolytes while sweating. As for the taste, after lots of tries, they discovered a peculiar mix of citrus flavors that can mask the bitterness⁴².

To reach the final decision on the taste, the director had the last words: between the two options he chose the one with more sugar in it. Since the drink is to be drunk after sweating, something sugary and tasty is needed, while the less sugary prototype was less sweet and in the director’s opinion customers wouldn’t have liked it after sweating a lot and being tired⁴³.

Designing the can was a relatively easy task. The design was to be simple yet expressive of the product, and it had little to no changes in the years. Some employees feared that using the blue color could have made customers perceive the drink as something else, an oil can, but directors

⁴¹ Pocari Sweat, ポカリスエットの誕生秘話, consulted on 18 January 2023. <https://pocarisweat.jp/products/story/episode01/>

⁴² Pocari Sweat, ポカリスエットの誕生秘話, consulted on 18 January 2023. <https://pocarisweat.jp/products/story/episode02/>

⁴³ Pocari Sweat, ポカリスエットの誕生秘話, consulted on 18 January 2023. <https://pocarisweat.jp/products/story/episode03/>

wanted to use the blue color⁴⁴.

Naming the product was, as already said, because the word “Pocari” recalled a blue and calm sky, plus the English word for 「汗」 (ase, sweat): sweat. What the company found out later, is that the name really fits the product: in Nepali, the word “Pokhari” means lake. In Nepal, there is a place called “Pokhara” in which there are many lakes originated by the flow of water from sacred mountains. So, as life is the source of life, the company wanted its product to be the source of hydration after sweating⁴⁵.

It is a nice development story, as it is entertaining yet explains the challenges that the company had to face to develop the drink. From a marketing point of view, it metaphorically looks like the drink itself: after struggling to find the right taste (which can be seen the symbol of sweating a lot), developing a satisfying product can be seen as hydrating while drinking it, and it gets more appealing to customers because even the development story has some resemblance to the product itself.

3.2.3: Pocari’s benefits

This drink is specifically designed to supply human body with chemicals which have great benefits on the body⁴⁶, and the official website suggests some moments in which it is better to drink some Pocari. It may seem a trivial thing communicating which moments are the best to enjoy some of this drink, but the marketing effort here consists in helping customers have a more active life, underlining external causes that may metaphorically threaten customers’ body and its well-being.

Doing so, the company is encouraging customers by explaining some cases, such as when doing physical activities. When sweating, drinking water is not sufficient to gain back the electrolytes lost with sweat, and because the work of the brain makes throat not thirsty but because of the same action, the body expels more fluids by urine. So, to enhance recover after exercises, it is recommended to drink beverages containing ions. The website also advices not to drink large amounts of water when feeling thirsty but to drink even before feeling thirsty⁴⁷.

To make customers really perceive that Pocari is better than other drinks the website shows with data and graphs how it works, providing data for a competitive advantage. The data are about the performance can make the difference for passionate people which are paying attention to staying hydrated while exercising. There is also a brief part about the sugar percentage contained, which may seem a contradiction for a sport drink, but explaining the action of the sugar helps in understanding

⁴⁴ Pocari Sweat, ポカリスエットの誕生秘話, consulted on 18 January 2023. <https://pocarisweat.jp/products/story/episode04/>

⁴⁵ Pocari Sweat, ポカリスエットの誕生秘話, consulted on 18 January 2023. <https://pocarisweat.jp/products/story/episode05/>

⁴⁶ Pocari Sweat, Products - ポカリスエット基本情報, consulted on 18 January 2023. <https://pocarisweat.jp/products/pocarisweat/>

⁴⁷ Pocari Sweat, “SCENE” – “Sport” , consulted on 12 December 2022. <https://pocarisweat.jp/scene/sport/>

how the drink works in supplying chemicals for the human body, making it a great example of how to market a product: explaining the pros of it while obtaining a competitive advantage.

It is interesting to note that Pocari can have a somehow beneficial effect after drinking alcohol⁴⁸. Alcohol's action makes the body expel more fluids than the absorbed ones, so it is better to stay hydrated by drinking Pocari, which can help contrast the diuretic effect of alcohol. It may seem a trivial aspect, but for people who like barhopping or simply drinking with friends, it can be a good way not to dehydrate because of alcohol intake: by marketing this effect not only people who exercise frequently but even other people can purchase this drink because of this effect.

Pocari's action can help when traveling long distances in cramped places, such as bus and airplane seats, since as stated on the website of Pocari⁴⁹, not drinking in such long trips is not a good thing for human body: there may be problems related to blood pressure and breathing issues. To prevent those, drinking ionized drinks (such as the analyzed drink) to stay hydrated.

Finally, I chose to analyze the effects of drinking Pocari while working⁵⁰. Since working seated on a desk can affect the flow of blood from legs to heart because of the pressure, which is the cause of blood not going back to the heart, to maintain a healthier office lifestyle the best should be drinking some Pocari and stretching frequently.

By highlighting such features, Pocari has a great variety of situations in which it can be purchased for different purposes, either be hydration after physical exercise or as drink while working: showing all these possible situations in which drinking it can help maintain a good level of hydration is how a competitive advantage is created for companies.

3.2.4: Pocari Sweat's commercials

羽なんか、いらないよ。(hane nanka, iranai yo – wings, no need for those.) (Pocari

Official Site, s.d.)

This commercial was made for the 2022 Spring campaign of Pocari Sweat⁵¹. It features a girl on her way from school. It is raining, but suddenly as she looks on her right, the weather turns into a sunny morning she sights a big cloud, which gets her curiosity, and she wonders if it is possible to go up there. She then jumps on a car and tries to make her way to that cloud: as she moves on, she sees a transparent veil which resembles a gigantic bubble. Then, she jumps again and again, until she

⁴⁸ Pocari Sweat, "SCENE" – "Liquor", consulted on 12 December 2022. <https://pocarisweat.jp/scene/liquor/>

⁴⁹ Pocari Sweat, "SCENE" – "Move", consulted on 12 December 2022. <https://pocarisweat.jp/scene/move/>

⁵⁰ Pocari Sweat, "SCENE" – "Office", consulted on 12 December 2022. <https://pocarisweat.jp/scene/office/>

⁵¹ ポカリスエット CM | 「羽はいらない」 篇 75 秒, consulted on 18 January 2023. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjufD18JxIE>

reaches the cloud and watches the blue sky. Then, the transparent veil bursts and she is standing on a cloud. After she smiles and contemplates the blue sky, the schoolgirl is “back to reality” as she sights on a bridge over the street, her friend which runs to her, and as the protagonist disappears to run to her friend. The commercial ends with the catchphrase 「羽なんか、いらないよ。」 (hane nanka, iranai yo – wings, no need for those.)⁵² (Pocari Official Site, s.d.) and after it, the logo of the product appears. This commercial has two variant versions. The first one has a different background music which is composed by Toby Fox⁵³, famous for being the composer of videogames soundtrack⁵⁴. The second one is a shorter version of the same commercial⁵⁵, with the background music composed by Toby Fox, and the only scene of the shorter commercial portraits the same girl on the cloud, drinking from a Pocari Sweat bottle.

3.2.5: Analysis of the commercial: sweat, wings, blue.

Before analyzing the commercial’s traits, I would like to start by commenting on a sentence used to describe the commercial on the website.

「汗が私をつれていってくれるから。」

(ase ga watashi wo tsureteitte kureru kara – sweat is what will take me there.) (Pocari Official Site, s.d.)

This sentence clearly refers to the action of Pocari Sweat on the body: after sweating it supplies the lost electrolytes and helps hydration. As the commercial shows a girl reaching a cloud, it is possible to imagine that, as the commercial shows that wings are not necessary to reach clouds, its her own will which helped by the sweat produced by her during her way to the cloud that made her come so far. Pocari here is just a helper after a long trip to the clouds. But it is implied that even if the drink is just a help in hydration, human body has the potential to do terrifying things, even reaching the clouds.

As previously stated, Pocari Sweat’s color is blue. To further make it clear and help customers in correctly perceive the color and the product, the whole commercial has blue objects, other than the sky. Starting from the uniform of the schoolgirl’s blue skirt and the details embroidered in her sweater

⁵² ポカリスエット ギャラリー, consulted on 18 January 2023. <https://pocarisweat.jp/cmgraphic/pocarisweat/>

⁵³ ポカリスエット CM | 「羽はいらない」 篇 75 秒 (Toby Fox Piano Ver.), YouTube, consulted on 18 January 2023. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pd_4cPQS7N0&t=1s

⁵⁴ Behind the scenes of Pocari Sweat, Pocari Sweat official website, consulted on 18 January 2023. https://pocarisweat.jp/cmgraphic/pocarisweat/docs/cm_poster.pdf

⁵⁵ ポカリスエット CM | 「羽はいらない」 篇 15 秒 C, YouTube, consulted on 18 January 2023. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouFPS7jt2c&t=2s>

and the necktie she is wearing. Even cars she jumps on and trash bags she lands in are blue. Everything here has some correlation to the main color of the product. The aim is to make the blue color what makes her jump, move, and reach the sky, without the use of proper wings. She is moving like that and reaching the cloud because she doesn't need wings, she is relying on her sweat (as it is possible to notice that she is glistening from sweating when there is a close up to her face while smiling). Her sweat is what made her reach the cloud. Another detail that may be futile but can have a great impact as well, is that she doesn't have something related to sport in her clothes, but only a school uniform. Since Pocari Sweat is not designed only for people who exercise frequently but for everyone who wants it, the catchphrase aforementioned has a more deep meaning as she is portrayed as a girl without references to sport. Everyone can enjoy this drink when needed, and even people who don't practice sport frequently can be more involved in purchasing it.

I would like to stress that the shorter commercial has a great impact as well. Even if it doesn't tell the whole story, the voice-over of the girl saying that she doesn't need wings to reach clouds is more communicative, as just by adding her voice, customers can get more involved as the message is clearly heard from them. Moreover, the blue sky in the background is more communicative of the main color of Pocari Sweat.



Figure 2 :Commercial of Pocari Sweat (Source: Pocari).

3.3: Pocari Ion Water

Pocari's lineup has another product, the ion water⁵⁶, which is a less sweet version of the Pocari Sweat. This ion water has a light blue label and the Pocari Sweat logo is visible under the name of

⁵⁶ Pocari Sweat, Products, イオンウォーター基本情, consulted on 18 January 2023. <https://pocarisweat.jp/products/ionwater/>

the product. To better explain the features of this product, the official website gives some information about it.

- Its effect is the same of the Pocari Sweat: supplying chemicals lost while sweating.
- The taste is less sweet and gives a fresh feeling after drinking it.
- There is no need to chill it in the fridge, since it is tasty even at room temperature.
- It comes in 5 sizes so each customer can choose the preferred size to purchase, and it is available even in powder, to enjoy it hot or cold.

The entire strategy of this product is about its benefits. While stressing that the human body is always losing electrolytes even if it doesn't sweat, by drinking this the perfect electrolyte balance can be maintained along being hydrated. It also highlights human relationships in its website⁵⁷:

「イオンウォーターを渡せば、相手の1日を気遣う気持ちが伝わります。」
(ion wota wo wataseba, aite no ichinichi wo kidzukau kimochi ga tsutawarimasu – giving someone a ion water bottle makes them think that you wish him a good day). (Pocari Official Site, s.d.).
Highlighting human relationships and experiences, even shared experiences, is a powerful marketing tool as it can give customers a nice customer experience with simple products, just like ion water.

3.3.1: Ion water's commercial

The commercial⁵⁸ features the actress Sakura Ando⁵⁹ working from home, as the commercial depicts the daily life during the pandemic of covid'19. To strengthen the impact of covid in the world's daily life, a hand sanitizer and face masks are seen as the new elements of a new style of living.

The actress in the voice over says that since covid has spread all over the world, it is mandatory to think about what is important in a new context of living. By saying that she is a little different from yesterday's herself, she implies that growing up and living in different historical periods (such as the covid '19's pandemic) is a long path: 「大人って長いよね。」 (otona tte nagai yo ne – being adult is a long trip). [イオンウォーター 「おとなは、ながい。～ステイホーム」篇 15秒]

The commercial ends with Ando in the background in the balcony, probably practicing some stretching. The product is shown along the catchphrase: 「甘くない。引きずらない。もう、青

⁵⁷ Pocari Sweat, Products, 日常生活にイオンウォーター, consulted on 18 January 2023. <https://pocarisweat.jp/products/ion-life/>

⁵⁸ イオンウォーター 「おとなは、ながい。～ステイホーム」篇 15秒, Youtube, consulted on 18 January 2023. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEmaJwEjaTg>

⁵⁹ Wikipedia, Sakura Ando, consulted on 18 January 2023. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sakura_Ando

くない。」 (amakunai. Hikizuranai, mou aokunai – Unsweetened. Not forced by others. Already grown up.) [イオンウォーター 「おとなは、ながい。～ステイホーム」 篇 15秒].

It is showing that this product is intended to be purchased and enjoyed by adults. By implying that she is different from yesterday's herself as previously stated, her likings have changed: she prefers a less sugary drink which seems like normal water but is an important way to keep hydrated and maintain a proper balance of electrolytes, especially during a critical period of pandemic (since the commercial was published on YouTube on the 28th April of 2021, moment in which Japan was still closed to tourism and in the emergency state caused by Covid 19, as stated in multiple documents from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan)⁶⁰.



Figure 3: Commercial of Ion Water (Source: Pocari).

3.4: Yakult 1000

Moving on to the next product, I would like to analyze the official website and the commercials of Yakult 1000, a drink made of fermented milk⁶¹. This product is made purposely to help relieve stress and help improve the quality of sleep of its consumers. The benefits derive from the lactic-acid bacilli “Shirota”, so-called in honor of Yakult company’s founder, Shirota Minoru (1899-1982)⁶². The product’s name also refers to the quantity of such lactic-acid bacilli contained the drink: it equals to 100 billion per bottle (1000 refers to the Japanese number 1000 億 (sen oku, 100

⁶⁰ Japan Declares 3rd State Of Emergency, 3 Months Ahead Of Olympics, Chappell Bill, consulted on 18 January 2023. <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2021/04/23/990133421/japan-declares-3rd-state-of-emergency-3-months-ahead-of-olympics>

⁶¹ Yakult, Company Profile 2021-2022, consulted on 12 November 2022. www.yakult.co.jp/english/pdf/profile2021-2022_en.pdf (p.7)

⁶² Yakult, Company Profile 2021-2022, consulted on 12 November 2022. www.yakult.co.jp/english/pdf/profile2021-2022_en.pdf (p.3)

billion). The official website describes this product as the Yakult product with the highest concentration of Shirota bacilli⁶³.



Yakult 1000

Figure 4: bottle of Yakult 1000 (Source: Yakult).

3.4.1: Yakult 1000's benefits

Its several effects are explained in the official website as a part of the marketing campaign, to help in understanding how this product can help and have an impact on customers' everyday lives.

3.4.2: stress moderation⁶⁴.

It is reported that the high concentration of Shirota bacilli in the product can help customers who drink it every day in reducing temporary psychological stress over 8 weeks of assumption, as data shows. Clinical tests reported that there is a minor concentration of cortisol (hormone which secretion rises during periods of stress) in the saliva of the people who assumed this product, and the sensation of feeling stressed and tired was more under control than normal.

Tests were conducted on men and women from the medicine faculty of an undisclosed university: 47 people divided in two groups. The people of the first group were made to drink a bottle per day of the product, while the remaining group was to drink another product with same taste and appearance, but without the active agent (Shirota bacilli). As the provided data shows, those who drank Yakult 1000's levels of cortisol and the level of fatigue were lower than people who didn't drink the same product.

⁶³ Yakult 1000, official website, consulted on 12 November 2022. <https://www.yakult.co.jp/yakult1000/>

⁶⁴ Ibid.

3.4.3: better quality of sleep⁶⁵.

Shirota bacilli added to the product help customers in having a better quality of sleep (such as deep sleep phases during the night and feeling refreshed when waking up) while experiencing a moment of stress (such as the exam period). Data shows that the non-Rem phase and quality of sleep had some improvements because of the Shirota bacilli. Moreover, according to the OSA (Japan organization of better sleep), the levels of drowsiness in the morning were better than the subjects who didn't consume Shirota bacilli. The tests were conducted in the same way as the tests, with just more people (94 people).

3.4.4: improvement of intestinal environment⁶⁶.

Shirota bacilli have a great function in helping intestinal environment in functioning better, helping the human body in different ways. As stated in the official website, continuous assumption of Shirota bacilli helps “Good mushrooms” (term used to make people understand better and in a more easy way) in that environment to proliferate, helping the organ to operate better for the body.



Figure 5: The effects of Yakult (Source: Yakult).

3.5: Yakult 1000's commercials

I would like to analyze the commercial spots created for this product. The aim of the commercials is to show how drinking this Yakult can help professionals in their field to work even better. The effect of the drink wants to counter stress and sleep problems, and the jobs chosen to help in understanding how this product helps body and mind are very effective.

3.5.1: 1st commercial, Akimoto Yasushi.

Akimoto Yasushi (64) is a lyricist, music producer and vice-president of Kyoto University of Art and Design. He is most known to be the creator of the idol group “AKB 48”⁶⁷.

He is featured in the first commercial promoted by Yakult 1000⁶⁸, and it shows how his job

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ “What is AKB 48?”, consulted in 18 January 2023.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20150214021505/http://www.akb48.co.jp/english/akimoto/index.html#>

⁶⁸ 【ヤクルト公式】 Yakult (ヤクルト) 1000 : 「秋元康」 篇 3 0 秒, YouTube, consulted on 18 January 2023.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l9ins0_vDnw

as a lyricist can become stressing and tiring. He explains that in a certain time he forgot that he was not only a lyricist for an idol group, but also a part of the audience of his works: this is fundamental for a content creator, since the opinion of the target audience is the most important thing to direct the next performance according to the tastes of the audience.

By saying this, it is possible that by drinking the Yakult 1000 his mind was a bit more at ease, and by becoming aware, again, of his role not only as a lyricist but also as a viewer of the performances of the group AKB48, made him realize that he has to constantly learn about the tastes of his audience to create new songs and rhythms to make his new songs even more popular. His songs need a careful marketing research to better grasp the new trends which could be included in his songs to make those a hit.

His catchphrase on the website is:

「まわりは関係ない。納得するまでやるかどうか。」

(mawari ha kankei nai. Nattoku suru made yaru kadouka – surroundings are not important. The matter is do it until satisfied.). [<https://www.yakult.co.jp/yakult1000/>]

Since he needs to create something that will satisfy the fans of the group AKB48, being satisfied in first place is necessary to ensure that fans will like songs and performances as well. By being more at ease in his mind because of the Yakult 1000, he may be able to write more songs which will become the favorite of fans.

3.5.2: 2nd commercial, Ninagawa Mika.

Mika Ninagawa (50) is a photographer and film director⁶⁹. She is featured in another commercial for the Yakult 1000⁷⁰, and is portrayed while shooting some pictures and later, sipping from a Yakult 1000 bottle. According to her voice in the commercial, being at ease in one's mind is fundamental to have the right feelings to take the best photo. In the other commercial⁷¹ which features her, shown on YouTube, she highlights the fact that this ideal state of mind can manifest after a good night of sleep, otherwise the quality of the photo won't be the best. Without expressing herself, she won't capture the best moment.

Improving the quality of sleep can make her more sensitive to external changes to what she is shooting in a certain time, such as more careful to her surroundings so she can find the best position

⁶⁹ Mika Ninagawa, Biography. Consulted on 18 January 2023. <https://mikaninagawa.com/biography/>

⁷⁰ 【ヤクルト公式】 Yakult(ヤクルト)1000 : 「蜷川実花:気持ち」 篇 3 0 秒, Youtube, consulted on 19 January 2023 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nsS9bkTGzeM>

⁷¹ 【ヤクルト公式】 Yakult(ヤクルト)1000 : 「蜷川実花:睡眠」 篇 3 0 秒, Youtube, consulted on 19 January 2023 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Op3Hqlwzao>

to shoot a photo. It may also be the best way to create the best mental state for the artist to take pictures.

She uses this catchphrase:

「 世 界 の 美 し さ を 、 丁 寧 に 伝 え た い 。 」

(sekai no utsukushisa wo, teinei ni tsutaetai – I want to communicate the beauty of the world in a kind way.). [【ヤクルト公式】 Yakult (ヤクルト) 1000 : 「秋元康」 篇 3 0 秒,]. By stating this, her aim is to be in the best mental state possible to shoot pics which can communicate to others the beauty of the world.

3.5.3: 3rd commercial, Tsujii Nobuyuki

Nobuyuki Tsujii is a Japanese pianist, born blind because of a disease⁷². In the commercial in which he is featured in⁷³, he states that to produce music that only himself is capable to create, he doesn't want to metaphorically challenge himself with a 「半端な気持ち」 (hanpa na kimochi – incomplete feeling, or in this case, a state of mind which doesn't permit him to perform at his best capabilities). The other commercial⁷⁴ which sees Tsujii as sponsor for the product, is about the pianist who comments his status as a professional pianist, and his comment is that false steps are not permitted in his work field, as his listeners may be disappointed.

It is possible to notice that in both the commercials he is starring in, there is this research for the best performance ever, as being a pianist requires lots of precision and years of training to get on famous stages. To better perform and maybe reduce the stress of playing a show soon or the possible anxiety of missing notes because of his disease, the effect of Yakult 1000 can be what he needs to feel a little more relieved before an important show.

He uses this sentence as his catchphrase:

「 私 に し か 出 せ な い 音 を 常 に 探 し 続 け る 。 」

(watashi ni shika dasenai oto wo tsune ni sagashitsudukeru – I am always searching for a sound that only I can produce). [【ヤクルト公式】 Yakult (ヤクルト) 1000 : 「秋元康」 篇 3 0 秒]

⁷² Avex Classics International, consulted on 19 January 2023. <https://avex.jp/tsujii/tsujii-en/profile/>

⁷³ 【ヤクルト公式】 Yakult1000 「辻井伸行:追求」 篇 30 秒, Youtube, consulted on 19 January 2023
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2UMVvfgxUVs>

⁷⁴ 【ヤクルト公式】 Yakult1000 「辻井伸行:プロ」 篇 30 秒, Youtube, consulted on 19 January 2023.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLhNQv29TII>

The catchphrase is interesting. As a matter of fact, his condition may be something that stops him from his job, but mixing his job as a pianist, which requires concentration and manual ability with good coordination, makes the catchphrase deeper: he can soar even higher because of his condition.

3.6: Comments on the marketing strategy

Showing in a simple way the benefits of the product can be the trigger of a competitive advantage as other products may overlook describing the benefits of a product or may be poorer in describing such benefits. Keeping the name simple is also a good strategy, as the product keeps the name of the company and just adds a number to make the product easily remember. Creating commercials with professionals of different work fields is a winning strategy as well: the three professionals starring in the commercials all come from different backgrounds and experiences in their job, but concentration is needed in each of the analyzed job. Using a different word can make a song different in the case of Akimoto Yasushi, choosing a different lens may create a totally different photo from the desired result in the case of Ninagawa Mika, and missing a note can be the trigger for a bad performance for Tsujii Nobuyuki. The music used for the commercials helps a lot as well: starting from a tumultuous melody created with the use of drums, the spots end with a lighthearted choir, which is useful to understand the benefits of the product.

By the effect of the Yakult 1000, it can be possible to feel relieved from the uneasy feelings due to its effect and sleep better before a big event or a normal workday. Considering the website and the commercials, both the YouTube ones and the ones broadcasted on television, the marketing campaign seems effective to illustrate the benefits of the product. Moreover, according to research made by the company, extending the sale of the product to the whole country increased the sales of the product by almost 500% in the first day of launch in the whole country (before it was sold only in the Greater Tokyo Area)⁷⁵.

As the target of the product are people ranging from 30 years old to 50 years old⁷⁶, showing the effects of the product in anxious situations can help more the sales, showing that famous people have moments in which they can get tired and feel uneasy. If the effect of the Yakult 1000 works for them, it can work for normal people who aren't famous.

3.7: Final comments

Analyzing the marketing campaigns of both Pocari products and Yakult 1000 was the discovery of a world of possibilities: hydration and balance of chemicals, better sleep quality and relieve from momentaneous stress. As if by drinking the analyzed drinks people could become

⁷⁵ Nikkei X-TREND, consulted on 19 January 2023. <https://special.nikkeibp.co.jp/atclh/NXR/21/yakult1104/index.html>

⁷⁶ Ibid.

superheroes. The marketing strategy for the advertising was very sage, as the products are recent and faced the direct impact of the pandemic situation caused by Covid'19, especially Ion Water and Yakult 1000.

The commercials for the products highlight the benefits by relying on human emotions. Sweat will take people far, hydration during hard times (not only in terms of the pandemic situation but in everyday life as well) is important and the chemical balance in human body needs to be balanced to feel better and to feel more relaxed and at ease, while sleeping better, soft drinks can help in this. Showing the benefits of a product in a way that makes potential customers feel more involved in the situation is a lot of help for the success of a marketing campaign.

Chapter 4: Asahi 生ジョッキ缶

4.1: Introduction

In the same way of chapter three, in this chapter the analyzed drink will be a beer produced by Asahi company, the beer called “Nama Jokki Kan”.

As the product analyzed here is an alcoholic drink, the choice made was to separate soft drinks from alcoholic drinks to give a better idea of the underlying light motif of this chapter: Chapter three was focused on how a soft drink can help human body's performance supplying various chemicals,

this chapter four has a focus on giving human people fun with the way of drinking this beer.

Analyzing the website⁷⁷ of this beer, the feeling was that this beer is made to give customers fun and surprise by the peculiar way in which this beer is supposed to be drunk, by completely opening the upper lid. This chapter will have as its fil-rouge the continuous discover of how the product was created and which feelings the commercials add to the experience of drinking this beer. As most products have a development time of roughly one and a half year to two years, to develop this product Asahi Brewery needed almost four years for this product to be finally completed.

This beer is the traditional Asahi Beer called “Super-Dry”⁷⁸ which has a very dry feature, which makes it more satisfying to drink, canned in a particular can that has the lid which completely opens⁷⁹. As the lid opens, beer’s foam comes out the can like the foam of the beer drunk at Japanese traditional taverns (izakaya), which gives a feeling to drinking this beer at home a “izakaya-esque” mood. Explaining how a product was created and designed adds more pathos from a marketing point of view, as customers can be more interested in how such a product was developed.



Figure 6: A can of Nama Jokki Kan (Source: Asahi).

⁷⁷ アサヒ生ジョッキ缶, consulted on 6 November 2022. <https://www.asahibeer.co.jp/superdry/namajokkikan/>

⁷⁸ アサヒスーパードライ, consulted on 21 January 2023. <https://www.asahibeer.co.jp/superdry/>

⁷⁹ アサヒ生ジョッキ缶開発ストーリー：スーパードライの新たなる歴史を刻む、

缶ビールの常識を覆す“世界初※”の挑戦。 , consulted on 6 November 2022. <https://www.asahibeer.co.jp/superdry/namajokkikan/story/kikaku/>

4.2: The desire of drinking a “Nama Beer” at home as a starting point

As stated by Nakajima Ken⁸⁰ (Brand Manager at Asahi Company) during an interview⁸¹, he felt that since recently new alcoholic canned drinks such as canned “Chuhai”⁸² and canned “HighBall”⁸³ are getting popular because of the cheap price and nice flavour, the choices for having a “ienomi” party are getting broader and broader for consumers. He also heard voices from customers saying that they wanted to drink the beer served at izakayas, the famous “Nama Beer” at home, and felt that a lot of customers may have wanted that scenario realized. That is the spark that gave him the concept of this product: a canned beer that has the exact same properties as the “Nama Beer” customers usually drink when having a night out, creating the name “生ジョッキ缶” which means “Nama Beer in a can”. “生” as the kanji of “fresh”, “ジョッキ” as the beer glass usually used in izakayas and “缶” as “can”, a can of beer in this case.

4.2.1: Why choosing the “Super-Dry” Beer

Nakajima states in the same interview⁸⁴ that once defined the concept of this new kind of product, the next step was the choice of the beer to use for the new product. Is it best to create a completely new brand or shall the “Super-Dry” beer be used? It is also stated by Nakajima that this debate became quite the topic in the whole Asahi Company. Then, he had the feeling that he wanted to bring new emotions to people by drinking beer, giving them a “ワクワク” feeling (“Waku-Waku”, which is the onomatopoeia for excitement in Japanese). [https://www.asahibeer.co.jp/superdry/namajokkikan/story/kikaku/] So, the best beer that could have given the perfect “ワクワク” feeling was chosen to be the already existing “Super-Dry” Asahi beer. Nakajima defines the history of their “Super-Dry” beer as a 「挑戦の歴史」 (chosen no rekishi, a history of challenge) [https://www.asahibeer.co.jp/superdry/namajokkikan/story/kikaku/], giving it the best appeal as possible. A beer that has faced many challenges and still have surfaced among the other Japanese beers and is the representative brand of Asahi Company. He ends his speech saying

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² 「チューハイ」と「サワー」の違いはなんですか？, consulted on 6 November 2022. <https://www.suntory.co.jp/customer/faq/001811.html>

⁸³ 「ハイボール」とはなんですか？, consulted on 6 November 2022. <https://www.suntory.co.jp/customer/faq/001770.html>

⁸⁴ アサヒ生ジョッキ缶開発ストーリー：スーパードライの新たな歴史を刻む、

缶ビールの常識を覆す「世界初※」の挑戦。 , consulted on 6 November 2022. <https://www.asahibeer.co.jp/superdry/namajokkikan/story/kikaku/>

that no other brand of Asahi beer could have given the customers the sense of surprise that using the “Super-Dry” beer can give.

4.2.2: Creating the can that can bring the product to reality

Many ideas and potential product plans were made, but according to Nakajima the best way to drink the beer is directly from the can. Thus, this seemed quite a joke when confronting this idea with the production department, which said him to stop playing around, as canned beers are made specifically not to spill foam when opened. Because of this, he understood that everything until that moment had to be completely turned around to create this innovative product.

During the production, Nakajima’s role was to report customers’ ideas and opinions to the production department. Every response after each step made was reported steadily, and to put this in simple terms, my core role was to observe if each new step or product made the customer feel that feeling.

Another fundamental part of the product is the design of the package, and how to communicate to customers that the more known “Super-Dry” started to lead something new, along a new design purposely made for this new way of the beer. Moreover, a design that recalled the name “生ジョッキ缶” was needed. It seemed a contradiction to express two different things such as the same beer that customers have always drunk and a new “old” way to drink it, but as the dialogue with the consumers continued, the ideas were shaped into a never seen before image, combining the qualities of both the “Super-Dry” beer and the new “生ジョッキ缶”.

4.2.3: The true meaning of being “The first in the world”

And so, it was completed the “生ジョッキ缶”. Since no other beer⁸⁵ has the feature of a completely removable lid that makes foam come out, it can be considered the first in the world of its kind. Even so, Nakajima states that real meaning is “challenge” and “innovation”. He is stating that Asahi Beer’s history along the “Super-Dry” ’s one has been a continuous challenge. Nowadays making people feel the “ワクワク” feeling by talking about beer has become difficult but with the introduction of this new product, Asahi Beer wants his customers to feel their innovative product. This is the meaning stated by Asahi Beer.

⁸⁵ アサヒ生ジョッキ缶, consulted on 6 November 2022. <https://www.asahibeer.co.jp/superdry/namajokkikan/>

4.2.4: “生ジョッキ缶”: Taste and Fun

Nakajima here states that he believes in the “power” of beer, like a positive force that brings people together and creates bonds between people. The emblem of such a thing, is the “生ジョッキ” usually drunk with friends and people just met. Even if because of coronavirus going out for a drink has become difficult due to restrictions and the spread of the disease, recreating the atmosphere of a typical night out with an online group drinking and at the top of it by drinking a “生ジョッキ缶” is what can bring joy.

To conclude, Nakajima talks about future challenges and what he can expect from the product, along his will to make his customers enjoy that feeling.

4.3: Nama Jokki Kan’s features

Asahi Nama Jokki Kan Beer’s key features are showed in the first video on the product site, and here listed⁸⁶:

- Let it cool in the fridge, then drink it as soon as possible when the beer is taken out.
- Since the overflowing foam can be less or even more depending on the room’s temperature, it is recommended that the temperature of the beer is in between 4° to 8°.
- Crack open the lid of the can in a safe place.
- The fourth step is optional, but to make even more foam come out from the can, it is recommendable to put hands on the can to make the foam come out easily.

To open the lid*, it is recommended to pay attention not to break the lid. In the video it is showed how to open it up, with a focus (by using a red color for the kanji of 垂直, suichoku, vertical) on how to open the can properly. Then, it is shown that pulling the lid opens the entire upper part. Here there is another focus on how it should be opened, (手前にまっすぐ, temae ni massugu, pulling in the direction of your hand) [<https://www.asahibeer.co.jp/superdry/namajokkikan/>].

To end the presentation of how to open the can, here appears the slogan “出来上がった生ジョッキ缶を、思う存分に楽しむ” (dekiagatta nama jokki kann wo, omou zombun ni tanoshimu, after opening your Nama Jokki kan, enjoy it as you please) [<https://www.asahibeer.co.jp/superdry/namajokkikan/>], implying that drinking beers is a funny and enjoyable activity, better if shared with friends like the two girls of the commercial spot are doing. The delighted face expression of the girls here is metaphorically stating that the Asahi Super-Dry

⁸⁶ Ibid.

Beer is always delicious, since it is a well-known product from Japanese customers and even this time with a renewed design and its “izakaya mood” given by the name, can satisfy its customers.

After drinking the beer, it is suggested that the lid is thrown in the can to recycle it, and the voiceover of the video talks about the sound made by the lid contacting the bottom part of the can as a “part of the fun”.

4.4: overview of how to handle the can

The next part of the website⁸⁷ refers to some “secret moves” (裏ワザ, urawaza, secret techniques) for those who want to have fun by experimenting with the foam.

- Fill a plate with warm water to see the foam come out fluffier. There is also a warning about the temperature of the water: if it is too hot, foam will come out strongly than anticipated, suggesting to customers to pay attention.
- Wash the can under tap water, and foam will be fluffier than normal.
- To help the overflow of foam, put the can upside down in the refrigerator, to help the overflow of the foam.

The commercial ends with the voiceover mimicking the girls saying the sentence “さあ、みんなも、楽しく、生ビール作っちゃおう！” (saa, minna mo, tanoshiku, nama biiru, tsukucchaou, come on, let’s have fun with a pint of beer!) [<https://www.asahibeer.co.jp/superdry/namajokkikan/>] giving to potential customers that by drinking this beer they can have lots of fun with their friends. By using the verb “作っちゃおう” (tsukucchaou, let’s make!) [<https://www.asahibeer.co.jp/superdry/namajokkikan/>] in the volitional tense, implies the fact stated in the interviews to the team who created this product: the target was to give customers a way to drink a nama beer at home: by opening the lid and the overflow of foam, the feeling given to customers is similar to experiencing firsthand the foam of a nama beer directly from the counter in a bar, as it was directly spilled in the can just opened.

Since this can is relatively new can, customers should be informed about how it should be correctly opened preventing eventual injuries from opening the can. To correctly open it, pull the tab until it is perpendicular to the can, and then insert a finger in the tab, to pull the lid and remove it. Another precaution given to customers wants them to be careful when opening the can, and to pay attention to the tab’s position: it’s not in its original position but is in an oblique position, pay attention to restore the position for opening it correctly.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

On the product's website there is also a section about how to correctly handle the closed can. After the purchase, the goods are often stored in plastic bags or similar, the can may open under various circumstances, such as it is entangling with some parts of the bag used for storage.

The site is also talks about a special Double Security created with Japanese technologies (and applied especially in high price range of canned foods, but according to the site this is the first beverage in which is used this type of seal) that is designed not to harm hands or mouth of customers. It also highlights the fact that during the R&D phases of the project it was given a particular attention about how to give customers a sensation of feeling safe while drinking and having fun.

4.5: 5つのポイント(itsutsu no pointo - the five points)

These are the five points⁸⁸ that make popular and more recognizable the nama jokki kan, as stated on its website:

- The lid opens completely: as shown in videos, this is a new element designed with the purpose of giving to customers the feeling of drinking the izakaya's nama jokki at home, especially during a global pandemic like the covid-19 one.
- The overflowing foam is delicious: since this is the main feature of this product, R&D department and marketing department wanted this to be as tasty as the one served in japanese traditional izakayas.
- It is the first time that a beer has this completely removable lid, and this feature permits to customers to drink it in big gulps, which gives to customers the feeling of drinking a Nama Jokki as in traditional japanese bars.
- Seeing the foam overflow from the can is funny, and every time a can is opened, foam can overflow in different ways due to the different handling of the can : as shown in introductive videos the way in which the can is chilled can affect how foam will come out.
- Customers can have the 生ジョッキ感 (Nama jokki kan: the feeling of drinking a Nama Jokki) at home. Interesting the use of the kanji “感” (“kan”: feeling) which is used in japanese to put emphasis on some words about the aspect of how people feel something. This kanji has the same reading (“kan”) as 生ジョッキ缶's 缶(“kan”: beer can): here the focus was to associate the name of the product with the feel of drinking izakaya-style beer at home (as stated before, to prevent people from contracting the covid-19 disease).

⁸⁸ Ibid.



Figure 7: How to open a can of Nama Jokki Kan (Source: Asahi).

4.6: Commercials

To further help with understanding how this peculiar can work, I chose to analyze the promoting videos of the Nama Jokki kan, both versions with Nakajima Kento⁸⁹ and Kikuchi Fuma⁹⁰, two members of the J-Pop boy band “Sexy Zone”⁹¹, along other commercials with Nishino Nanase⁹² and Shiraishi Mai⁹³ as main characters, former members of the idol group “Nogizaka 46”⁹⁴.

4.6.1: 待ちきれない (machikirenai - Can't wait!)

Starting with Nakajima and Kikuchi's short videos⁹⁵, at the very beginning of the first video the celebrities shot a little introduction with the hashtag #生ジョッキ缶やってみた (namajokkikan yattemita, here we try the namajokkikan). In the first scene one of the singers takes the cans out from the fridge, while the other one says “テンション高いじゃん” [アサヒスーパードライ CM 「生ジョッキ缶やってみた！待ちきれない」 中島健人&菊池風磨篇] (tenshon takai jan, the tension is high!), eagerly anticipating the taste test of the beer. After choosing with a じゃんけんゲ

⁸⁹ Kento Nakajima, consulted on 6 November 2022 https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kento_Nakajima

⁹⁰ Fūma Kikuchi, consulted on 6 November 2022 https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/F%C5%ABma_Kikuchi

⁹¹ Sexy Zone, consulted on 6 November 2022 https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexy_Zone

⁹² Nanase Nishino, consulted on 6 November 2022 https://asianwiki.com/Nanase_Nishino

⁹³ Shiraishi Mai, consulted on 6 November 2022 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mai_Shiraishi

⁹⁴ Nogizaka46, consulted on 6 November 2022 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nogizaka46>

⁹⁵ アサヒスーパードライ CM 「生ジョッキ缶やってみた！待ちきれない」 中島健人&菊池風磨篇, consulted on 6 November 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RV5evXCmE1I>

ー△ (janken gemu, a japanese version of the game “rock paper scissors”), one of the two men before opening his can shows it to the camera, along saying the catchphrase 生ビール作っちゃおう (nama biru tsukucchaou, let’s drink a nama beer!). It appears the super dry beer’s logo as well, to indicate that it is the same super dry brand that is so loved by japanese customers.

4.6.2: 裏ワザ:手で包む (urawaza: te de tsutsumu - secret technique: wrap your hands over it)

The second video⁹⁶ starts with the same opening scene of the first video with the same hashtag. After the brief introduction, Kikuchi opens his can and then foam starts to come out from the can: he is surprised and starts exclaiming “ヤバイヤバイヤバイ” (yabai, which has a multitude of meanings, and it means “amazing” in this case) [アサヒスーパードライ CM 「生ジョッキ缶やってみた！裏ワザ 手で包む」 中島健人&菊池風磨篇], showing his excitement. It is also shown that the foam can spill out the can when Nakajima says “あー溢れちゃった” (afurechatta, it overflowed!). after taking the first gulp, Nakajima asks how is the beer by saying “どうどうどう？” which can be translated as “so? How is it?”, and asking three times indicates Y’s eagerness to drink his beer, along with wanting to know what X thinks about the first gulp of beer. Y then with enthusiastic voice exclaims “うめー” (umee, delicious!), an expression which leaves nothing to imagination. He adds the sentence “まじで生ビール！” (maji de nama biru, it is REALLY nama beer!), stating that it has the exact same taste of the nama beer served in izakaya. After taking a gulp, the scene moves to Kikuchi wrapping the can with his hands, for showing that foam come out when doing such a gesture: when he says “ヤバイヤバイ見て見て” (yabai, mite! Which can be translated as “woah look at this!”) the camera moves on top of the can showing the foam, as like the watcher of the video was there with the celebrity to see foam coming out. The video ends with the same logo of the super dry beer and then Kikuchi says to Nakajima to try himself to open a can and see what happens.

⁹⁶ アサヒスーパードライ CM 「生ジョッキ缶やってみた！裏ワザ 手で包む」 中島健人&菊池風磨篇, consulted on 6 November 2022.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FNktxVF_EYQ

4.6.3: 裏ワザ:ぬるま湯につける (urawaza: nuruma yu ni tsukeru - secret technique: put it in warm water)

In the third video⁹⁷ Nakajima, who has already drunk a bit from his can, takes a bowl of warm water and wants to show to Kikuchi and to viewers one of the so called “Special Techniques” to properly enjoy a Nama Jokki Kan. Kikuchi seems astonished and exclaims “中島さんやらかしちゃってますわ” (nakajima san yarakashikattemasu wa, Nakajima you did that!) [アサヒスーパードライ CM 「生ジョッキ缶やってみた！裏ワザ ぬるま湯につける」 中島健人&菊池風磨篇] as he probably knows what his co-star will do. As appears on screen (“もう一度泡立つよ！”, mou ichido awa tatsu yo! , foam rises again!), even after drinking a bit from the can, if the can come to contact with warm water foam rises again.

4.6.4: 裏ワザ:セクシーカラン (urawaza: sekushii karan – secret technique: sexy cling)

To conclude the analysis of the two men’s videos, the fourth video⁹⁸ is all about how to increase awareness on recycling the can and how to properly dispose of it: by putting the lid of the can into the can itself. Since the lid is a little bit smaller than the can, it perfectly fits. As it appears on the video, the highlighted sentence says “飲んだ後はフタをセクシーにカランと入れてリサイクル” (“nonda ato wa futa wo sekushii ni karan to irete risaikuru”, after drinking put your lid into the can in a sensual way) [アサヒスーパードライ CM 「生ジョッキ缶やってみた！裏ワザ セクシーカラン」 中島健人&菊池風磨篇]. After debating about how to make it sexier, Nakajima says “地球にセクシーサンキュー” (chikyuu ni sekushii sankyuu, a sexy “thank you” to Earth), implying that the focus of this video was to raise awareness about recycling. Nakajima tries multiple times to land a little flip to make the lid land in the can, but never succeeds in it. After the logo of the Super-Dry beer pops up, and Nakajima exclaims “カランまでが、生ジョッキだから” (karan made ga, nama jokki dakara, the nama jokki is empty and ready to be recycled). This sentence has the literal meaning of the beer can empty and ready to be recycled but has another meaning, which is hinted by the interviews of the Nama Jokki Kan members: since it’s a new and interesting way to

⁹⁷ アサヒスーパードライ CM 「生ジョッキ缶やってみた！裏ワザ ぬるま湯につける」 中島健人&菊池, consulted on 7 November 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFurboC30C0>

⁹⁸ アサヒスーパードライ CM 「生ジョッキ缶やってみた！裏ワザ セクシーカラン」 中島健人&菊池風, consulted on 7 November 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTMxPKBprSI>

drink a nama jokki, fun is over only when the lid reaches the bottom of the can, producing the “karan” sound said by Nakajima.

4.7: Commercials, second part

To further the explanation of the hashtag #生ジョッキ缶やってみた, I will analyze the four videos made by Nanase and Mai by “Nogizaka 46”.

4.7.1: どこが新しいの? (doko ga atarashii no? – where is new feature?)

The first video⁹⁹ of the singers is about them taking the cans out from the fridge to try it. The two seem questioning about what is new about the can, but then Shiraishi Mai gives Nanase her can and rushes to the table to drink the beer. On the screen appears the banner “とにかく早く飲みたい 2人 (tonikaku hayaku nomitai futari, the two want to start drinking soon)” while they’re guessing what is new about the can (they also add “どこが新しくなったんだろうね (doko ga atarashiku nattanarou ne, what is new on this?) [アサヒスーパードライ CM 「生ジョッキ缶やってみた! どこが新しいの?」 白石麻衣&西野七瀬篇] to further help customers in guessing that something was redesigned). The video ends with the former idols shouting the catchphrase of the beer: 生ビール作っちゃおう (nama biru tsukuchaou, let’s drink a nama beer!).

4.7.2: 裏ワザ手で包む (urawaza: te de tsutsumu - secret technique: wrap your hands over it)

This second video¹⁰⁰ opens with Shiraishi opening her can and while wrapping her hands at the can, foam starts to come out: while shortly focusing on the foam that rises at first, the focus shifts to the woman trying the drink and her giving her opinion about the taste (“めっちゃくっちゃおいしい (meccha kuccha oishii, that is so delicious!) [アサヒスーパードライ CM 「生ジョッキ缶やってみた! 裏ワザ手で包む」 白石麻衣&西野七瀬篇]. It doesn’t stop here though: the point of this video is to highlight the fact that if wrapping without putting pressure on the can (as shown on the screen while Mai is doing such action with the black banner that says “パワーを込めているわ

⁹⁹ アサヒスーパードライ CM 「生ジョッキ缶やってみた! どこが新しいの?」 白石麻衣&西野七瀬篇, consulted on 7 November 2022. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYRsr_BWcGQ

¹⁰⁰ アサヒスーパードライ CM 「生ジョッキ缶やってみた! 裏ワザ手で包む」 白石麻衣&西野七瀬篇, consulted on 7 November 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKEJIQRAS1c>

けではない (pawaa wo kometeiru wake de wa nai, she is not putting power on the can)”) can make foam rise again. Shiraishi also adds “泡カムバック (awa kamubakku, the comeback of the foam)” to explain what happens in doing that.

To encourage Shiraishi in doing this action, Nanase a few second before says “飲んだら、お約束のー？ (nondara, oyakusoku no...? , if you drink it, something will happen...?) to give customers a sense of anticipation in what will be shown soon.

4.7.3:裏ワザ:ぬるま湯につける (urawaza: nuruma yu ni tsukeru - secret technique: put it in warm water)

The third video¹⁰¹ is all about the special techniques used to make foam come out of the can. Here Nanase takes some warm water described as “魔法のお水 (mahou no omizu, magical water)” [アサヒスーパードライ CM 「生ジョッキ缶やってみた！裏ワザ ぬるま湯につける」 白石麻衣&西野七瀬篇] to do the same trick done in Kikuchi and Nakajima’s video (裏ワザぬるま湯につける). At the end of the video Nanase adds a catchphrase used to instruct people in being careful when doing this at home.

4.7.4: 裏ワザ: 逆さに冷やし (urawaza: sakasa ni hiyashi – secret technique: chilling upside-down)

In the fourth and final video¹⁰², Shiraishi explains that by cooling the can upside-down, something may happen: “逆さに冷やすと、何かが起こるらしいです (sakasa ni hiyasu to, nanika ga okoru rashii desu, when cooling it upside-down, something is prone to happen) [アサヒスーパードライ CM 「生ジョッキ缶やってみた！裏ワザ 逆さ冷やし」 白石麻衣&西野七瀬篇]. The answer to this question is that if cooled in such way, foam is more likely to come out of the can faster, and the red banner also helps in the understanding of this by saying “いつもより泡立つよ！ (itsumo yori awa tatsu yo, more foam is coming out compared to the usual, referring tho the normal way of chilling the can). Then, Shiraishi adds that she doesn’t know why foam comes out faster than usual,

¹⁰¹ アサヒスーパードライ CM 「生ジョッキ缶やってみた！裏ワザ ぬるま湯につける」 白石麻衣&西野七瀬篇, consulted on 8 November 2022. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCRf_hv4_bY

¹⁰² アサヒスーパードライ CM 「生ジョッキ缶やってみた！裏ワザ 逆さ冷やし」 白石麻衣&西野七瀬篇, consulted on 8 November 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eyO75zN9WmY>

and at the very end of the video, Nanase exclaims “わかったら教えて (wakattara oshiete, if you get to understand how this happens let me know)” to give customers a feeling of discovering a new way of drinking the beer and a cool trick to have more foam come out.



Figure 8: Advice about the consumption of the Nama Jokki Kan (Source: Asahi).

4.8: お客様の声 (okyaku sama no koe – voice of customers)

Since this product is relatively new, the first customers who had the possibility to try it, had such responses and feelings about the can¹⁰³. The responses were summarized into five points which will be briefly disclosure below. Each point is about a characteristic of the product itself, either about the can or the beer. The highlighted part of the phrase is purposely highlighted since the official site itself has that part highlighted, to emphasize about the key feature which Asahi wanted to promote by using that phrase.

1: **飲み口が広い**ので美味しく飲める (nomikuchi ga hiroi node oishiku nomeru, since the opening at the top of the can is large it becomes easy to drink) [<https://www.asahibeer.co.jp/superdry/namajokkikan/>]. The first peculiarity which is ready to be seen by customers is the larger opening at the top of the can, the removeable lid shown in official commercials for the product.

2: やっぱりビールには**泡が必要**と改めて感じた (yappari biiru ni wa awa ga hitsuyou da to aratamete kanjita, I was proven that foam is essential in beer) [<https://www.asahibeer.co.jp/superdry/namajokkikan/>]. Since the overflowing foam is the most

¹⁰³ アサヒ生ジョッキ缶, consulted on 6 November 2022. <https://www.asahibeer.co.jp/superdry/namajokkikan/>

flashy characteristic of this beer, customers who experienced this were noticed by drinking that foam can be considered essential for a good beer.

3: 本当に泡が出る！クリーミな泡でとっても美味しかったです。(hontou ni awa ga deru! Kuriimi na awa de totemo oishikatta desu, foam really comes out! Because of the creamy foam the beer tasted delicious) [<https://www.asahibeer.co.jp/superdry/namajokkikan/>]. As stated before, foam is crucial in this product and having it come out from the can and mix to the liquid gives it the peculiar taste that customers can have at Japanese pubs, while drinking a can of Nama Beer.

4:開けて数秒後、泡がもこもこ出てきた！めちゃくちゃハマりそうです！(akete suubyougo, awa ga mokomoko to detekita! Mecha kucha hamarisou desu! , after a few seconds, foam come out! It can become an addiction seeing it overflow!) [<https://www.asahibeer.co.jp/superdry/namajokkikan/>]. This sentence is all about the characteristics of the foam: it comes out in a もこもこ(mokomoko) way, which means “fluffy”. Such an adjective refers to the foam being just like if it was poured into a beer glass, and moreover the second highlighted part of the sentence, ハマリそう(hamarisou) means that it can become metaphorically an addiction to watch the foam come out from the can.

5: 居酒屋行かなくても生ビールが楽しめていい！宅のみの時は絶対買いたい！(izakaya ikanakutemo nama biiru ga tanoshimete ii! Takunomi no toki wa zettai kaitai!) [<https://www.asahibeer.co.jp/superdry/namajokkikan/>]. This product was considered as another way of drinking a Nama Beer during the pandemic of covid-19, that’s why customers have the feeling that it can become a sort of go-to beer to enjoy at home without having to go to izakaya (as stated in the sentence).



Figure 9: Can of Nama Jokki Kan and the comments of customers (Source: Asahi).

4.9: Final comments

The overall marketing strategy of the product is effective: explaining how from the initial project the R&D team along the marketing team and the whole company were involved in the creation of the Nama Jokki Kan is a great effort to communicate the value of a product. The storytelling adds more implicit value to the product itself, as there is a great attention to outlining a story that gives to customers the perception of a product that has been carefully designed and researched to offer the most pleasure while drinking their beer safely, without the fear of cutting one's lips.

The commercials have a great effect of explaining the features of the product: the former idols have such a unique way of communicating how customers should enjoy their beer, being a bit evasive on how customers will understand how beer's foam rises, adding more intrigue and mystery, leaving to customers the resolution of how the foam rises when temperature changes, while giving tips to customers about how to properly enjoy their beer.

The choice of casting former idols has a nice effect too. Having them star in the commercials,

customers can be more intrigued about the purchase of the product, especially if the idols in the commercials are fan favorite¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰⁴ The Effect of Celebrities in Advertisements, consulted on 6 November 2022. <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/effect-celebrities-advertisements-56821.html>

Conclusions

By choosing the products analyzed in this work, the aim was to have a different perspective on soft and alcoholic drinks. The choice of not specifying the products analyzed in this work was intentional: as stated in the comments received in the survey, every person who gave feedback had the image of soft drinks as sweet but with many sugars added, unnatural colors and said that a prolonged consume can be dangerous for health. As for what stated for alcoholic drinks, it is undeniable that consuming large quantities of alcohol is dangerous for health, as stated in various comments to the survey.

Still, the aim of this work was to change perspective about the normal knowledge about this kind of drinks: by choosing to analyze the marketing strategy of soft drinks healthy for the human body which can supply electrolytes useful after sweating or for a better hydration and a drink designed to help reduce stressful feelings and sleeping better, there is the possibility that people who have an idea about soft drinks which is not what should be expected from a healthy product, promoting this kind of drinks could have a good effect as the drinks analyzed are not limited to people who practice sport or a specific activity, everyone can enjoy a bottle of Pocari Sweat, Ion Water or a Yakult 1000.

Shifting the topic to alcoholic beverages, by the analysis of the “Nama Jokki Kan”, the most evident trait of this beer is the fun that opening the lid can give to people who drink it, and finding more and more ways to open the lid to generate even more foam from the opening. Alcohol has bad effects to the human body, but drinking responsibly can be a way for a better understanding of how alcohol should be handled by everyone, especially in Japan, as there is the culture of “Nomikai” which even if it is declining due to a poorer participation since the downsides of such events, is still a widespread phenomenon.

Using marketing to make a product stand out more than competitors can give a boost in terms of competitive advantage or a better perception in the eyes of consumers, and this has been done very well for the products analyzed.

Pocari Sweat and Pocari Ion Water can be useful for a multitude of people with different lifestyles and various habits, making it a product without a precise category of consumers, which in this case is an added value as the range of customers can include university students who want to take a break, or elder people having a walk around their home. Pocari Ion Water’s commercial is a marvelous example of how to handle a delicate situation as the COVID-19 pandemic: as habits are changing, so must be done in terms of supplying the body with precious nutrients and chemicals to avoid having further problems other than what the COVID-19 disease does to the body.

Yakult 1000’ strategy is focused on stress relief and better quality of sleep, and the commercials have done a quite good job in giving the idea that every kind of work, even the most creative ones, make people deal with stress and bad sleep probably due to anxiety of the performances.

By showing that this drink can help a bit in having a better mental state for a better performance has a good impact on sales, as shown, because some people that might deal with the same problems portrayed in the commercials might need this drink to perform better.

The analyzed beer is not a revolutionary drink, as it has already been recognized for being one of Japan's most known beer, but by simply changing a lid, it became a good product that gave people some fun in a critic time like the pandemic situation. Just with a simple intuition which was hard to develop, people could have fun when opening a can of "Nama Jokki Kan" and watching foam come out. The videos of Nishino Nanase and Shiraishi Mai also highlight the pleasure of discovery when in the last video, one of the girls asks directly the customers to let her know why foam comes out so nicely when the can is chilled in a determined way. It is undeniable that alcoholic drinks can be harmful for health, but this work's aim is not to counter alcohol consumption, but just to analyze the effectiveness of the beer's marketing campaign.

There is the possibility to research more of this argument, showing that even for products that are considered somehow "bad" and unhealthy, there may be a product of this category that can give its contribute to the human body with its features. The role of marketing in this case will be to point out the prominent features and show those to the public to make it become a best seller.

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