

RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Brand Innovation and Sign Mobility of Slogans: An Analysis of Coke Slogans

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### Abstract

This paper presents a theoretical reflection on the contemporary expressions of the brand, emphasizing the role of slogans as a means of upgrade and innovation of identity mark to examine the potential communicative slogans capacity. Methods and Design: Uses the shape and content approach to examine the potential communicative slogans capacity as a strategy to extend the possibilities of connecting people and product significantly with five independent categories on shape and content variables. Results and Discussions: By analysis Coca Cola slogans became evident that the mobility presented in the last ten years, with exchange recurring slogans because of the low plasticity of other expressions of the brand, for example, logotypes or packaging. Sign mobility of the slogans points to potency as an expressive element capable of providing constant updates without weakening the strength of the brand sign.

**Keywords:** *Brand expressions, Brand identity, Innovation, Slogan.*

### Introduction

Towards the immensity of possibilities for purchasing products and services accession, combined with information access and technological evolution, contemporary man became more critical and demanding in their choices, charging coherence among discourse and sustainable practices in companies, as well as transparency and valuing people by organizations. At the beginning of the new millennium, there were public demonstrations against numerous corporations, either because represent American culture, such as McDonalds, Microsoft or IBM, or by being accused to use slave labor or child labor, the Nike case. Artificial products as well motivated protests, as occurred in 2005 in India against Coca-Cola or against the use of animal skins, as occurred in 2006 and 2009 in Paris, at the door of Louis Vuitton on the Champs Elysée. Worldwide boycotts and complains, with demonstrations in the streets or on the Internet, and books as *No Logo* by Naomi Klein [1] or movies as *Super Size Me*, a criticism of the fast food sector preached the revulsion to brands.

It is likely that a significant portion of demonstrations are legitimately anchored in search of a more consciously relationship with consumer, that includes a complete review of the role of brands in our everyday life. In the examples above is not questioned the positive dimension that brands have in contemporary society, hedonistic and technolocal [2-4]. In his reflections about today's society that include considerations brands as promoters of multiculturalism and privileged understanding of consumption as experience that produces values instead of mere appendix of production [5]. At another direction Chevalier & Mazzolovo [6] states that the act of buying is a civic act, a means for the consumer to restore the balance of power, and in this regard, including the formation of civic conscience. Questions that should be asked about the brands [6]a) the quality or brand encourage consumer's feelings that may directly or indirectly lead them to personal development? b) In all manifestations of the brand (product, advertising, events, etc.) exist respect for the dignity of the public? Finally, in a broader view c) The

corporations and their brands are ethical and transparent in all actions and attitudes involving employees, suppliers, the environment and the stakeholders with it relates?

The brands through their managers should take the vanguard in the discussion about the new roles of men and women in society, the preservation of the environment, solidarity and respect for diversity of all kinds, among other burning issues, Lipovetsky & Machado [4] demonstrates that contemporary man lives as schizophrenic between the culture of excess and the praise of moderation. Negate brands, is to deny the survival system that we elected for many years. The act of buying takes contemporary as strong significance when set as the main engine power of actors-consumers, that create opportunity to become increasingly a manifestation of civic and social solidarity, as occurs in shopping engagement, such as the environment preservation and the development of the local community aiming at sustainability. The signs that consumption assume the centrality of life already in the sixteenth century, but was made evident from the eighteenth, as Mc Craken [7] declaring that the connection among consumption and individualism manifests a major cultural merger already in the modern world.

### Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is part of the evolution of thinking about brands and their identity expressions as much as the prospect of Marketing Communication. Subsequently, the reflection continues with Iasbeck [8] and Reboul [9] studies about the slogans as a manifestation of the brand.

Brands are the symbolic link between organizations and people [10]. This symbolic construction of identity starts with the choice of own brand name [11] through different expressiveness as a symbol, slogan, packaging etc. that the organization builds over time [7, 12-15]. Aaker and Joachimsthaler [14], Kelleret al [16] or Kapferer [17] attributed this to set the concept of elements or mix or brand identity mix. The brand sets itself as a complex sign seeks to combine durability with updated without becoming schizophrenic, i.e. dissociate essence of marketing practices.

There are two movements quite evident over the brands. A towards the social differentiation, brands are a symbol of economic success, success, high status, "those that went right." We may cite the purchase and use of products of different brands or observation of consumption in Europe,

for consumers from Muslim countries who sought the use and/or consumption of brands recognized the manifestation of their individuality, often curtailed when compare to motivated individualization in the western, eastern or other continents. In another movement, the brands are a path of affirmation of identity, authenticity, personalization and often even of denial culture. The first movement suggests being more present in developing countries called, whereas the second presents strong in developed countries as uneven societies with large income concentration marks are the symbol of success achieved by few. Similarly, but for different reasons, Arab consumers uses different purchase rituals, possession and products and brands usage [7].

In societies economically and socially developed, in general, the brand is diluted as a symbol of social differentiation, but enhanced as the icon of authenticity, origin, affirmation of traditional values and even counter-culture, such as *Desigual Store* where standardization and massification are refuted, or even the Adidas Retro Shoes, the Smart car, a partnership between Swatch and Mercedes Benz and many others.

The movement in search of authenticity, origin and distinction is a result of the counter-position to the mass production and supply, that why numerous strategies of brands dealing in customizing more intended result response. A Louis Vuitton bag can be customized, as well as a Brazilian refrigerator Brastemp product lines "you" and several items of the Smart car, or even a Rolls Royce emblem of glamor, luxury and tradition in vehicles.

In the face of such complexity the search for differentiation based on centrality of the brand proposal becomes increasingly difficult to develop that creates tension between perennial versus innovation [18,19]. The same time as should be kept true to our mission, who implies the congruence and integration of their identity expressions, without ignoring the possibility of constant updating and connections maintenance of with their consumers, like corporate image can be understood as an important dimension of quality[20].

Besides the name, another dimension of prominence in the expressions of the brand, it is the slogan. It is believed that slogan is a word of Celtic origin, the people who occupied the center of Europe centuries between 1,000 BC and 400 BC. The slogan was originally used as a battle cry, with the purpose of stimulating the warriors

to fight through expressions rational and affective built with their people.

The slogan nomenclature varies from culture to culture. In many parts of the world are simply "slogans", and in the United States, slogans are identifications or taglines [8]. In the UK, are the final lines, lines or end lines Ad. In Germany means statements, while France it is used as signatures. In Holland, the slogans are profitability or pay offs. For those with no imagination, are stolen or rip-offs. At AD Slogans Unlimited, are called "slogos" (slogan next to the logo). The slogans often treated as trademarks (in most countries). The use of the symbol is merely a statement of the advertiser that treating the slogan as a trademark that does not guarantee any legal right.

A brand name may be a trademark, such as Kodak, Xerox, McDonald's, Fly London, 7Up or Coke, but slogans cannot be protected for use exclusively since are everyday verbal constructions of collective domain.

The purpose of the slogan as an expression of the brand also gives much resemblance to its origin as it keeps the primordial role of mobilization for determined action - consumption in various rituals<sup>21</sup> [7] in addition to build sense, not necessarily between people, but between people and brands.

There is no room for neutrality in language. Every discursive manifestation is guided by some purpose, veiled or explicit, under the purview or not of consciousness the interpreter. And the slogan as an expression of the value proposition of the brand must be a purpose-oriented and in that sense, is a privileged expression despite verbal essence, visually and aesthetically develops the brand. To fulfill this role effectively, a slogan should express the same time and the dimensions of an integrated form and content. Reboul [9] stated: "Strength is inseparable from its form".

Regarding the form it is important that the slogan be short, concise, clear and simple, mnemonic, i.e., easy to memorize, euphonic: pleasant sounding and preferentially aesthetic, which includes a deep knowledge of the culture in which the brand is intended to be inserted and share their essence. In an advertisement slogan creates the key message of the brand in the mind of the interpreter, the consumer to position the value proposition.

Concerning to content, a slogan must be precise to transmit the desired message. The message can be variable about brand differentiation. Slogans may be functional or emotional contents, that better explains positioning or with intimate and nationalists contents.

A slogan must satisfy the several criteria. Be memorable - mnemonic dimension. Memorability got to do with the ability to remember the phrase without special efforts. Those criteria are based on the legacy of the brand and how much the line has been used over the years [8,9].

A slogan should recall the brand name and the ideal is that the brand name is included in the phrase: "My goodness, my Guinness!" works like "Coke is it!" When successful passes quickly into common parlance, as a cliché, that be repeated daily. Besides an illustration, story or relevant alliteration (Jaguar: "Don't Dream It...Drive It"), words coined or made (Louis Vuitton: "Epi Leather"), anecdotes and are good ways to create a memorable slogan. Therefore also occurs with a jingle. The integration of the brand slogan makes it more familiar and believable.

A slogan should include a key benefit: "Engineered like no other car in the world" (Mercedes Benz), "The second largest international airline of Britain" is a statement 'so what?' (the former Air Europe). You can say "I want a car designed like no other car in the world", but it is unlikely that you say, "I want a ticket the second largest international airline in Britain".

Also a good slogan should differentiate the brand [8,9]: the "Heineken refreshes the parts other beers cannot reach" does this brilliantly. It is a classic in brand communication. When it was necessary to renew the slogan, it has been extended in later executions to show seemingly impossible situations, as a deserted expressway at rush hour, with the slogan "It could only be Heineken" and show improbable situations, but admirable, as a group of engineers trying to keep quiet with the comment: "How refreshing! How Heineken!". These distinctions demonstrate a slogan that describes characteristics of the brand to the differentiation from competitors.

A good slogan should remember and link the brand name [10]. What is the advantage of running an advertisement where the brand name is not clear? Although millions of dollars are wasted this way, if a brand name not in slogan, is

better it to be firmly suggested. Nike dares to run ads that transmit their symbol (the "swoosh"). The word Nike is unspoken and even appears in advertisements. This semiotic use of the brand is hugely potent when it works, because it forces the viewer to say the name of the brand: Nike swoosh. A technique to remember the name of the brand is to create a slogan that rhymes with it. It is inadequate mention a brand name without rhyme. Examples include "A Mars a day helps you work, rest and play". Mars brings back its famous "Work, rest and play" slogan after 13 years and Paul Masson a jug wine produces slogan "We will sell no wine before its time". We have weakened the brand when use a rhyme, can be expressed as "A banana a day helps you work, rest and play!"

A slogan should transmit positive feelings about the brand: All slogans mentioned previously do this, some more than others: "Hyundai. Drive your way", "Coke Is It!", "Gatorade. Is it in you?". Contrast this concept, the slogan for your Triumph TR7 sports car in 1976: "It doesn't look like you can afford it." Newport cigarettes or American: "After all, if smoking isn't a pleasure, why bother?", and Citibank slogan: "Where money lives". Another relevant characteristic is that a good slogan should not be used by a competitor: you cannot replace a competitive brand name and use the same slogan.

### Methodology

This study uses the shape and content approach to examine the potential communicative slogans capacity as a strategy to extend the possibilities of connecting people and product significantly.

This analysis uses five independent categories on shape and content variables. In shape variable this study analyzed categories as: conciseness, simplicity and clarity, mnemonic potential, euphonic potential and visual aesthetics. In content variable analyzed categories as: functional contents, emotional content, key benefit evident, differentiation, and inclusion of brand name based on the theoretical framework presented on brands and their expressions

[10,11,12,15,16,17,21] and especially the reflections on the potential communicative slogans [8,9] according to the categories and variables, presented in Table 1.

The rationale for this process was that since integrated marketing communications dictates a consistency of message the Coca-Cola slogans used on Table 2 represent the desired destination brand position. Also, the Coca-Cola slogans were chosen because is the world's popular soft drink

and their slogans are language phenomena. Sold in more than 200 countries, it is produced by The Coca-Cola Company and is often simply referred as Coke. Both advertising theory and practice were included in Coke advertising campaigns. New ideas and new attempts to reach some interest of the audience are aimed to evoke the desire in the mind of consumer and to let something in a memory - something that can be remembered by the next generations [22]. The success of Coca-Cola campaigns, slogans, songs, products etc. is a cultural *phenomenon* and tradition.

The analysis of some of the strengths and weaknesses of case study research, that is no simple check list of criteria, against that the validity and quality of a piece of case study research can be judged. If common tests of objectivity, sample size, clear numerical categories and generalizable are applied, many case study researches fail, almost by definition.

Rather, judging the worth demands some understanding and careful thinking by the reader. These and many other questions can and should be asked of any case study that is read. Ideally, should be asked from a position of some prior understanding: of the topic being investigated, and/or of the strengths and limitations of the methods and approaches used. A single case study design also offers opportunity to undertake a deep and but narrow exploration of a particular phenomenon as slogan analyses [23].

**Table 1: Categories and variables on shape and content**

Shape	conciseness	Simplicity and Clarity	mnemonic potential	euphonic potential	visual aesthetics
Content	Functional contents	Emotional content	Key benefit evident	differentiation	Inclusion of brand name

Table 2 presents the slogans Coca-Cola selected for analysis purposes.

**Table 2: Coca-Cola slogans used in the Study**

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2000 - Enjoy.
2001 - Life tastes good.
2003 - Real.
2005 - Make It Real.
2006 - The Coke Side of Life
2007 - Live on the Coke Side of Life
2009 - Open Happiness

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Source: Coca-Cola Company

## Results

**Table 3: Results of the analysis of the slogans of Coca-Cola**

Shape	Conciseness	Simplicity and Clarity	Mnemonic potential	Euphonic potential	Visual aesthetics
2000: Enjoy	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO
2001: Life tastes good	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES
2003: Real	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
2004: Make It Real	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES
2006: The Coke Side of Life	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES
2009: Open Happiness	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Content	Functional contents	Emotional content	Key benefit evident	differentiation	Inclusion of brand name
2000: Enjoy	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
2001: Life tastes good	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
2003: Real	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
2004: Make It Real	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
2006: The Coke Side of Life	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES
2009: Open Happiness	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO

Table 3 presents a summary of the application of protocol analysis slogans for brand Coca-Cola. The initial findings are that the slogans of Coca-Cola are established through emotional messages and no functional appeal. This result is not a surprise considering that Coca-Cola brand is in the maturity stage. It is also clear that much of the slogans of the brand have great euphony potential (loudness) and at least half of them do not include the mark on their written expression and also are not exactly concise. The reference to the key brand benefit is not evident, even in slogans latest (2009 and 2010) the benefit is indirect and subjective (happiness).

All these factors are contrary to the theoretical framework proposed in this paper. This evidence leads to a reflection about the strength of the media presence of the brand as a major driver of brand identity, even in cases where the expression mark is not the appropriate - Coca-Cola is globally recognized as of the brands that invest in advertising and promotion in multiple vehicles.

Another finding about the slogans is that in ten years, five slogans made explicit mention of "life" or as a noun (live) or verb (to live). What underlines this use is intended to generate a sense of creating emotion that connects the brand to life and, indirectly, their essentiality.

Over the past two years Coca-Cola presented four different slogans that certify the use of this expression as upgradeability and brand innovation, and other manifestations maintain continuity of meanings (name, logo, packaging ...). Another relevant feature is also expanding the polyphony of the slogans of the brand in recent years<sup>4</sup>. The slogans of Coca-Cola are suggestive in meaning, are not ready, but are constructed in interaction with their interpreters, are open to the projections and the varied associations that insert them into a cultural perspective and proximity to meet different perspectives. This position is highly contemporary and reveals the centrality of dilution, authoritarianism and one-sidedness of the power of brands. The meaning is not given by the organization and managers, but it is suggested, indicted, stimulated and completed in interpreting mind.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The brands extend the expressive capacity as a strategy to extend the possibilities of connecting people and product significantly. Having a good name and logo for many years is not enough to build the brand identity, even if it includes the dimensions visual and synesthetic. Slogans have the possibility to build strong sense connections when presented which signifies consistency respecting the precepts mnemonics, strategic and aesthetic [8,9]. However, even if these principles

are not fully met, the force's presence on advertising and promotion of the brand may camouflage the weaknesses constitutive slogan frontally not affecting ability to generate bonds of sense.

By analyzing the slogans of Coke is showed that the mobility presented by brand, trade with recurrent slogans and even simultaneous with the same campaign slogans is due to low plasticity of other expressions of the brand, for example, or logotype even packing. The constancy of expressions of identity Coca-Cola analyzed in the study by Perez [11] and Slater [24] showed perpetuity of the name, logo and packaging. The mobility of a slogan indicates a potential significant element capable of constant updating without diluting the strength of the brand. Slogans latest Coca-Cola contributes with messages that express contemporary value such as sustainability in a broader spectrum. Coca-

Cola haltered by the inflexibility of many of his expressions keeps absolutely innovative in their messages through the mobility of slogans.

Every research method implies limitations, and in this study, based on theoretical and slogan analysis of Coca-Cola, is the limit in temporal cut: 2000-2009. Slogans such as Coca-Cola are a global brand and slogans, yet adjusted, a multicultural approach bring significant contribution. Case studies can make no claims to be typical. Furthermore, because the sample is small and idiosyncratic, and because data are predominantly non-numerical, presents difficulties to establish the probability that data are represents some larger population. Some aspects of qualitative study be fairly easily presented in numerical form, but much cannot. Finally, data from qualitative studies describes the qualities or characteristics of something. It is difficult to reduce these descriptions to numbers- as you can the findings from quantitative research; though you can achieve this through an encoding process. Qualitative research studies can provide you with details about human behavior, emotion, and personality characteristics that quantitative studies cannot match [25-30].

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