

Quite Like Before: The Power of Emotional Storytelling in Coca-Cola's Campaign Open Like Never Before

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Abstract

Few multinational companies worldwide can claim to be able to equal the communicative power of Coca-Cola: every advertising and marketing device conceived by the drinks company is a masterpiece of brand image construction and promotion, and of course of corporate storytelling. One of the purposes of corporate storytelling is indeed to build consumer loyalty through brand reputation in order to implicitly reinforce people's opinions about corporate values; considering sustainability, for example, many companies are now including environmental concerns in their promotional strategies.

Coca-Cola's most recent advertising campaign, Open Like Never Before, provides an excellent yet controversial example of emotional storytelling. This paper aims to observe the characteristics of Coca Cola's strategies from the theoretical/methodological frameworks of multimodal critical discourse analysis and ecolinguistics – the "ecological analysis of discourse" (Alexander/ Stibbe 2014: 104). Drawing also from other disciplines such as social semiotics, and from theories of emotional capitalism, the present study considers both verbal and visual elements to the purpose of deconstructing the sophisticated storytelling techniques employed by Coca-Cola in the Open Like Never Before advertisement. By examining corporate reports and communications via official website and social media, the company's actual commitment to change and sustainability will also be examined so as to yield further relevant information. Ultimately, the discrepancies between the core message of positive change and the negative performances of sustainability reported by the company will be outlined, thus vouching for a multitude of intertwining research perspectives.