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Think Coca-Cola — one big drink

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With divisions, subdivisions, acquisitions and wholly owned subsidiaries Coca-Cola is the 78th largest American corporation. Its net worth, including the trademarks, approaches \$4,000 million. But this includes only 22 of the 1,800 bottling plants pumping out Coke around the world.

The others are bottling franchises who buy syrup and supplies from the 22 major syrup plants. Not even Coca-Cola has estimated the combined net worth of the bottling companies, but with the assets of the Coca-Cola corporation itself, it would possibly comprise the world's largest privately owned enterprise.

Coca-Cola has made more millionaires than any other product in history. A single share purchased for \$40 in 1919, when they were first offered to the public, is now worth some \$8,500 including splits and accumulated dividends. Last year was the best in Coca-Cola's history, a statement that can be made every year.

One big happy family

The Coke executive explained: "If all the Coke ever produced were in regular (6-1/2 ounce) bottles placed end to end, they would girdle the earth 3,500 times — or reach the moon and back 200 times. If it were distributed in regular bottles to everyone in the world, each person would get 220 bottles. If a single bottle was large enough to contain it, the bottle would be over a mile high and 2,000 feet wide."

Coca-Cola brings the American way of drink to 138 countries, 15 more than the United Nations' membership. 90 million Cokes a day are consumed, 250 products in 500 packages; nothing, it seems, can stop it.

Coca-Cola is everything I exist for," said a senior vice-president at corporate headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. "I live and breathe it. We all do. It's made us what we are." It was 9 a.m. and he was gulping Coke from the bottle, his first of the morning. Free Cokes are dispensed on all floors of all company offices, and most executives chain-drink them throughout the working day.

America's best

"Americans associate Coca-Cola with the flag and motherhood," reflected an advertising officer, "and that's the image we work night and day to maintain. We don't dare use sexy advertising or cheap gimmicks. We avoid association with alcohol and such things; Coca-Cola is an all-family drink for all ages, and we can't afford to offend the sensibilities of any group anywhere. We stand for the very highest quality and finest taste. Clean-cut, upright, the family, Sunday, the girl next door. Wholesomeness. America's best."

Coke was first produced in 1885 as a hangover tonic by an Atlanta pharmacist, John Pemberton, who at the turn of the century sold his interest to another all-American pharmacist, Asa Candler.

The man who succeeded Candler in 1923, Robert Woodruff, in his 80's, still participates in major company decisions and exemplifies the qualities of American business leadership.

Woodruff struck out in earnest for a world market. He had a vision of everybody in the world drinking Coke — "Chinese coolies and Cuban campesinos, English debutantes and Italian peasants."

And when Pearl Harbor was attacked in 1941, Woodruff declared war too. No GI anywhere, he promised, would ever go thirsty for a Coke — at five cents a bottle. General Eisenhower co-operated magnificently. One



of his first concerns after securing beachheads in North Africa and Normandy was the construction of Coca-Cola bottling plants. American soldiers — Ike included — downed 10,000 million bottles of Coke during the second world war.

"When a soldier in Vietnam has a Coke," a vice-president recently reflected, "it satisfies his need to identify with the American tradition and way of life. It reminds him of what he's fighting for."

Heavy, heavy ads

The Coca-Cola advertising budget, unofficially estimated at pushing \$100 million, is a company secret. But its officers admit that Coke is the most heavily advertised product in the world. Thus, Coke illustrates the trend of American business: less effort is expended on the product itself than on increasingly frenzied publicity about it. Since the ingredients of Coke never vary, and the manufacturing process has remained essentially unchanged for 75 years, the remark of the one vice-president is very understandable: "Communications come first, even before the product itself. How to put it across is what counts."

There are nine million Coke billboards already on the surface of the earth. Coke executives seem to feel that their advertising helps make America beautiful. A recent company brochure informs new employees, "When you don't see a Coca-Cola sign, you have passed the borders of civilization."

practice and



confidence

They go hand in hand to make you good, then better and finally the best you can be. Whether it's riding, swimming, playing the piano or just becoming a complete person.

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