

Message on a Bottle

3 MIN READ



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I'm not embarrassed to admit that I shared a Coke.

I bought a Courtney for my wife and a Nick to complete our Coke couple. Unfortunately, I've had no luck in my hunt for Landon or Camryn – the names of my son and daughter – so I'll have to create personalized glass bottles online to complete my family set.

As a cynical consumer, I try to avoid campaigns that are clearly meant to suck me in and get my credit card out of my wallet. But as a marketer, I appreciate campaigns that people can connect with on multiple levels. And *Share a Coke* involves the consumer in a way that goes well beyond Starbucks writing my name on a coffee cup. My name is actually printed on a bottle in the iconic Coke font!

Even people who don't intend to consume the beverage are going to the store and rifling through the fridge to find their name or that of a friend and they are sharing it with their social media followers. Although that doesn't drive revenue for Coke, it certainly drives organic (and free) brand exposure.

Connecting with Consumers

Without a doubt, the Coca-Cola brand has done an excellent job making things personal over the last few summers (they launched this campaign in 2014) by adding first names on cans and bottles of Coke, Diet Coke and Coke Zero. They've likely introduced their product to new consumers and reconnected with others who may have strayed after taking the Pepsi Challenge.

It goes without saying that this is integrated marketing at its finest. There's digital Coke sharing, videos on YouTube and worldwide tours with consumers lining up to create their own mini cans. You can read for days if you search [#shareacoke](#) on Twitter. And, there is no shortage of editorial media coverage either – people are using *Share a Coke* to propose or announce a pregnancy and it's making news!

Seeing our own name on items – or the names of family members and friends – brings out the kid in all of us. Spinning a store display to find a keychain or bicycle license plate adorned with our moniker is a shared human experience. The *Share a Coke* campaign sends the message that this type of personalization, albeit automated, continues to resonate with consumers.

It's also a good reminder for entertainment organizations to take a personal approach with their customers. Being on a first-name basis with your audience can be easily accomplished with good CRM technology and

an organizational culture that stresses and supports data literacy. The cleanliness of the data that is captured – both demographic and behavioral – will then allow you to take your marketing campaigns to the next level. Create personalized relationships, know who to talk to and when, perhaps even surprise a VIP supporter with his or her favorite drink (doesn't have to be a personalized can of Coke) at their seat on a special occasion.

As a consumer, it's nice to get emails that start with "Hello, Nick!" – but it's the companies that take things to that next level that really impress me.

So, what can you do to "impress" your customers?

- Stop by the seats of loyal customers for a quick hello to show them that they're valued.
- Reward the most generous donors with branded SWAG in their size.
- Offer intelligent up-sells and cross-sells based on past purchases.
- Deliver relevant, personalized website content when customers log into their accounts.
- Provide early access to tickets based on the value of the customer.

We all want to belong. Feel valued. Share a connection. Maybe even a Coke! But regardless of our personal beverage preferences, this engaging campaign is one that should inspire you to create amazing new experiences for your customers.