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CONSUMER DEMAND TEAM WITHIN COCA-COLA BOTTLERS
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CONSUMER DEMAND TEAM WITHIN COCA-COLA BOTTLERS IRELAND

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The topic of this Bachelors Thesis is Consumer Demand team within Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland. The main purpose of this research was to find out the benefits that this team brings to Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland and to explain its core functions.

The theoretical part of thesis examined the integrated marketing communications and the integrated marketing communications mix. Communication ethics was also discussed as it is important for the case company, as well as image and brand management. Material for the theory was collected mainly from literature but also articles were used.

A qualitative method was chosen for the empirical study. The research was carried out by open-ended questionnaires in order for the team members to be able to express their own opinions. The questionnaires were sent via email. They were summarized and conclusions were formed, in order to create recommendations for the case company.

The results of this research indicated that the Consumer Demand Team is an important part of Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland because they bring various benefits, not just concerning the sales of their products but also when it comes to the productivity and efficiency of other departments within Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland as well.

The recommendations were based on the analysis of the questionnaires. The aim of the recommendations was to give references of possible improvements and to open new possibilities.

IRLANNIN COCA-COLAN MYYNNINEDISTÄMISTIIMI

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Avainsanat: Integroitu markkinointiviestintä, Brändin hallinta, viestintämix, myynnin edistäminen

Tämän opinnäytetyön aiheena on Coca-Cola Bottlers Irlannin myynninedistämissiimi. Tutkimuksen päätarkoituksena on tutkia mitä etuja kyseinen tiimi tuo yritykselle, sekä kuvata sen ydintehtävät.

Työn teoriaosuudessa käsitellään integroitua markkinointiviestintää ja viestintämixiä. Myös viestinnän etiikka on oleellinen osa teoriaa, sillä se on tärkeä tekijä kohdeyritykselle, kuten myös brändin johtaminen. Materiaali teoriaosaan kerättiin enimmäkseen kirjoista sekä artikkeleista.

Empiirisen osan tutkimukseen valittiin laadullinen tutkimusmenetelmä. Tutkimus suoritettiin avoimen kyselylomakkeen avulla, jotta tiimin jäsenet ilmaisivat mahdollisimman paljon omia mielipiteitään. Haastattelut tiivistettiin ja johtopäätökset muodostettiin, joiden perusteella kohdeyritykselle laadittiin toimintasuosituksia.

Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittivat että kyseinen tiimi on tärkeä osa Irlannin Coca-Colaa, sillä se tuo yritykselle erinäisiä etuja. Näillä ei ainoastaan tarkoiteta myynnin lisääntymistä, vaan myös Coca-Colan muiden osastojen tuottavuuteen ja tehokkuuteen vaikuttavia tekijöitä.

Kyselyt analysoitiin ja niiden pohjalta laadittiin kohdeyritykselle toimintasuosituksia. Niiden tarkoituksena on antaa viitteitä mahdollisista parannuksista, sekä uusista mahdollisuuksista.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This study examines the Consumer Demand Team, which is an in-house promotional team of Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland. The idea of the study was formulated when I was working for Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland and became intrigued of their different functions. The aim was to find out whether the Consumer Demand Team is working efficiently and if it is beneficial to Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland. For that purpose surveys were conducted to the team members. With the help of the results of the surveys it is aimed to find out if the Consumer Demand is working up to their full potential and if they could be doing something differently, in a more efficient manner, and thus increase awareness amongst consumers and increasing sales.

The theoretical part of this research explains the basic concepts behind the Integrated Marketing Communications and the Communications Mix as these provide the base for the work that Consumer Demand Team does. These issues are explained using models, frameworks and theories from various sources.

This research is within a field of study that is widely researched and it is important because it gives a good example on how companies can benefit from the theory and turn it into practice. It is not always as easy as it seems to be, but Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland has managed to create a valuable asset from that field. This research is also for helping others to be able to create similar benefits by turning theory into action.

Most of the people, if anyone, have not heard of the Consumer Demand Team before reading this thesis. Hopefully it will be fascinating to read about and it might help the readers to understand different techniques of promotion and advertising. For Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland it will point out new ways to approach the same, familiar events and happenings and hopefully create new opportunities.

2. CASE COMPANY COCA-COLA BOTTLERS IRELAND

2.1 Background of Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland (CCBI)

Coca-Cola came to Ireland in 1952, after the set up of the first bottling company in the country, Munster Bottlers of Cork. Two other companies opened plants following the success of Munster Bottlers, one in Dublin serving the Leinster area and the other in Tuam serving the West of Ireland. These three plants joined forces and became Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland (which will in this document be referred to as CCBI), which produces and distributes The Coca-Cola Company brands for the Irish Market. (Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland)

Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland is owned by Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company, which is the combination of Hellenic Bottling Company SA and Coca-Cola Beverages plc. Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company was formed in August 2000 and it is one of Europe's leading soft drink bottlers. They are active in over 28 countries serving a total population of over 500 million. With a geographical range that stretches from the Republic of Ireland to the East, covering most parts of Russia, Estonia and Nigeria, Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company is focused on meeting the demands and local tastes and cultures of all of its markets. (Coca-Cola HBC)

CCBI is part of The Coca-Cola Company, which operates in over 200 countries and is in charge of marketing more than 20 brands in Ireland out of the total 400 brands belonging to the Coca-Cola family. CCBI also enhances existing brands and creates new ones in order to meet the needs of the consumers in Ireland. (Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland) Their product line includes carbonated and non-carbonated soft drinks, juices, water, sports and energy drinks, and ready-to-drink beverages such as teas and coffees (Coca-Cola HBC). The company is marketing 4 different flavours of Coca-Cola, as well as Sprite, Sprite Zero, Fanta, Dr Pepper, Powerade, Nestea and Schweppes, which are also well known brands in Ireland. In addition of these CCBI is marketing Lilt, Deep Riverrock, BPM Energy, Oasis, Fruice and Appletiser, just to name a few. These products can be seen from the figure on the following page.



Picture 1: Key brands in Ireland (Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland)

Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland's headquarters is located at the Western Industrial Estate on the Naas Road in Dublin 12. The headquarters includes bottling and distribution facilities and head offices of the Irish Operation. Regional distribution warehouses are located at Cork, Killarney, Tuam and Tipperary, which also provide a base for the local sales force. Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland is a sister company of Coca-Cola Bottlers Ulster (CCBU), which is based in Lisburn, Co. Antrim. They manufacture cans for the Republic of Ireland as this facility does not exist at their Dublin plant and also produce and distribute The Coca-Cola Company brands in Ireland. CCBI and CCBU are managed by a joint North/South Management Team. (Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland)

CCBI employs approximately 650 employees directly and hundreds more indirectly. The company ensures significant contribution to the Irish Economy by sourcing over 95% of all its raw materials locally. CCBI is committed to the idea of responsible corporate citizenship, preserving the environment, strengthening their communities, refreshing the marketplace and enriching the workplace. (Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland)

2.2 Consumer Demand Team (CD Team)

The CD Team is CCBI's in-house promotional and sales team who deal directly with the public and customers on behalf of the company. The members of this team are involved in the activation of number of events and special projects around Ireland. The events include music festivals and concerts, sporting events such as GAA (Gaelic Athletic Association) matches and International Rules. Gaelic is an Irish word and it is used to separate Irish football from the European version of football. International Rules on the other hand is a combination of Gaelic and Australian Rules football, and is played on a home and away basis every year, alternating between Ireland and Australia.

The CD Team also does samplings in supermarkets, small deliveries around Ireland and commercial work helping other departments within the company. Through this work the members will gain experience in every form of promotion and become familiar with many areas of public relations, marketing and customer care.

The main job of the team is to promote CCBI's brands and maximize consumer opportunities at events. The CD Team increases visibility and sales at the events and activates consumers to use the various products the company is selling. Moreover the CD Team manages samplings in supermarkets and shops, especially when the company has produced a new flavour because it is an excellent way to get consumers taste the new exciting product. Sometimes consumers need a little convincing in order for them to buy a certain product. Samplings are also a good way to get immediate feedback. In addition to these, the other departments within CCBI benefit from the CD Team as well because the team members can be booked to assist for example in the Human Resource, Public Relations, Finance or Sales departments. This provides the team members with better insight to the company itself but also gives them the chance to gain important experience from different fields of the company.

The setting-up of events begins with surveying the site to acquire information on how to brand the area and where to locate the sales units. The Event Manager acquires the needed stock to be sold while the team begins to prepare the equipment to be used during the events. The team also merchandises the coolers and makes sure everything is in place in the units and ready to be opened for business. It is essential to brand relevant

areas with the different marketing equipments, including flying banners, mega coolers, bungees and flex stands because branding the surrounding area gives visibility, thus it is important to carry it out carefully and in a highly organized manner.

The Events Team (meaning the same as Consumer Demand Team) is made up of twenty team members supervised by Team Leaders Kate Knox and Shane Watters. Assistant Events Manager Robert Crabbe oversees the Team Leaders and provides support to Sheryl Graham, the Events Manager. She is responsible for running all of CCBI's events including on the ground activation of their sports sponsorships and activities, music festivals and concerts, and other events. The Events Team is a part of the Public Affairs and Communications Office in Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland. This department is in total responsible for public affairs, media relations, company communications, sponsorship, corporate and social responsibility implementation, IMC (integrated marketing communications), events activation and consumer complaints. The organizational chart for the Public Affairs and Communications Office can be found on the following page and there can also be seen how these different responsibilities are being divided between the employees.

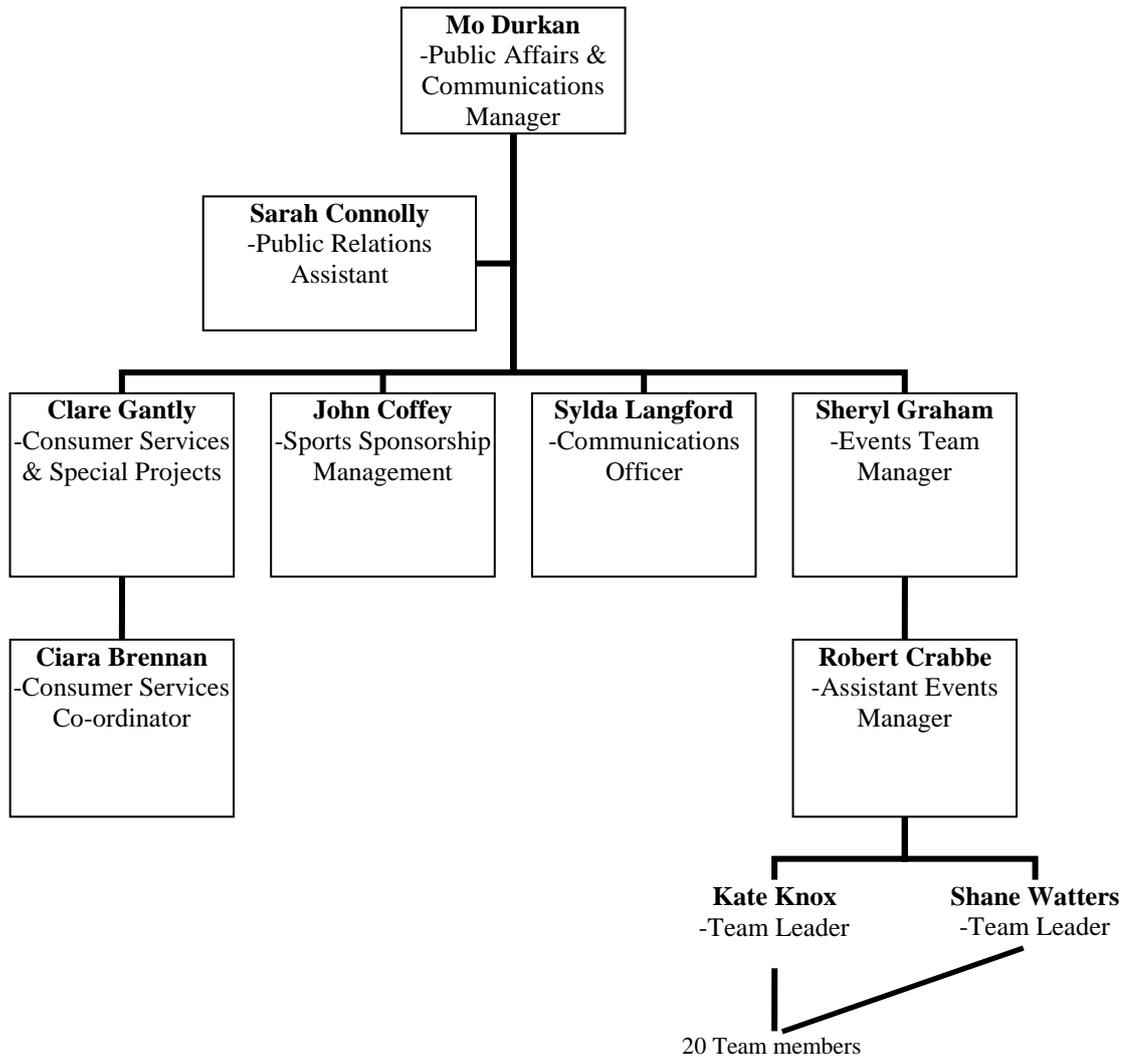


Figure 1: Organizational chart for Public Affairs and Communications Office in CCBI.

The company provides the CD Team with uniforms, which are expected to be worn at all times while representing CCBI. The uniform includes black trousers, a white t-shirt and a red jumper. The team members are also given safety shoes, a jacket, a body warmer, rain trousers and caps. All of these are branded with the company's own logos and brands to increase visibility and awareness. It is important that every employee always presents themselves for work in a clean and orderly fashion, especially since the company is in the food industry and cleanliness is amongst the most important messages that Coca-Cola wants to communicate to consumers.

The CD Team is provided with a company vehicle for work purposes as necessary. The Team has three Jeeps at their disposal which they are allowed to use when assigned with work that requires the use of a vehicle, for example when making deliveries to Croke Park Stadium, Dublin's Sport and Concert Stadium. Naturally these vehicles are all branded with Coca-Cola logos and commercials.

Due to the nature of the job the working hours will vary on a weekly basis. Hours will be as needed and subject to individual suitability and capability to particular field marketing activity. The Team Leaders, Assistant Events Manager and Events Manager assign the most suitable team members to work during a certain event.

3. INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

Coordination and integration are vital to the successful implementation of any strategy, thus market strategies must be consistent with corporate and business unit strategies. Integrated communications is concerned with using all of the various communications tools in an integrated manner to provide maximum impact in pursuit of the firm's goals. (Capon & Hulbert 2001, 372)

Definition of integrated marketing communications:

Integrated marketing communication is a process which involves the management and organisation of all "agents" in the analysis, planning, implementation and control of all marketing communications contacts, media, messages and promotional tools focused at selected target audiences in such a way as to derive the greatest economy, efficiency, effectiveness, enhancement and coherence of marketing communications effort in achieving predetermined product and corporate marketing communications objectives.

(Pickton & Broderick 2001, 67)

3.1 Creating Shared Meaning in Marketing Communications

The challenge of marketing communications is to communicate *the right message, in the right way, to the right people, in the right place, at the right time*. Fundamental to the understanding of marketing communications is an understanding of the marketing communications process which can be seen illustrated below. (Pickton & Broderick 2001, 13)

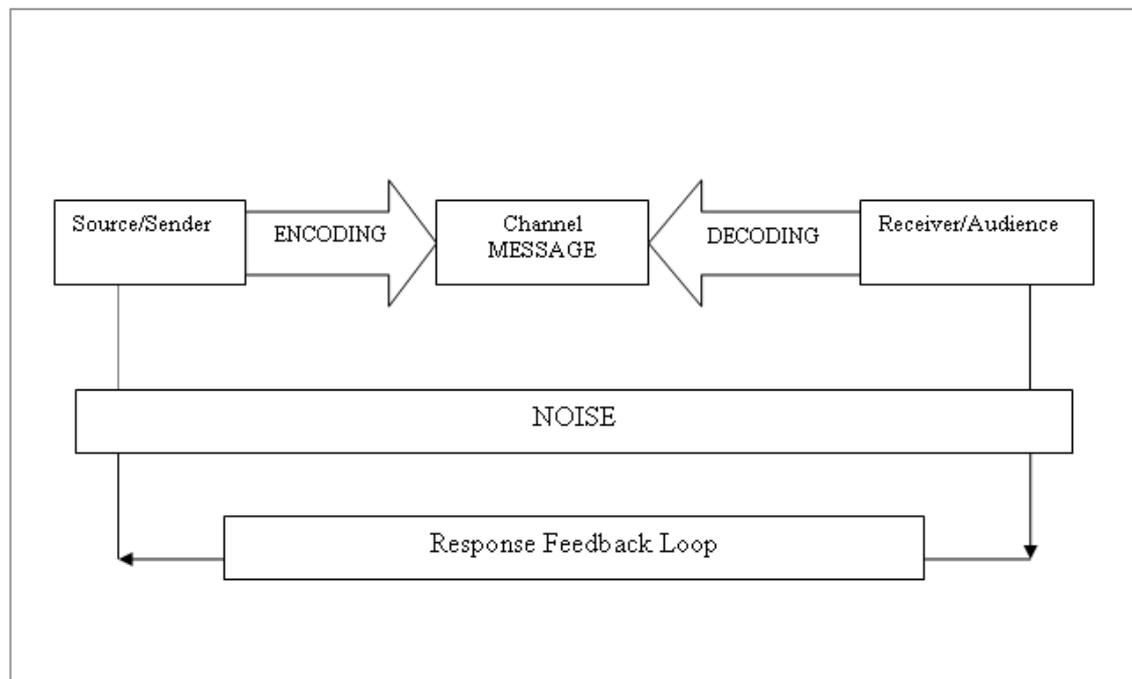


Figure 2. The Communications Process (Sisk, J. 2005)

The source, which in this research is CCBI, encodes the messages through various channels, for example advertisements, promotions and CD Team. When an individual decodes these communicated messages into concepts within his/her own experience they get meaning and when an individual converts these messages into useful knowledge he/she goes through different stages of thought. This is called *information processing*. The stages of thought can be divided into five steps. First one is *exposure*, which in this means the consumer must feel some kind of relation to the communicated message. *Attention* is the next step where the consumer must be aware of the message and find it appealing. *Comprehension* is where the consumer understands the message and begins to interpret it in order to understand the meaning it is intended to have. After this comes the fourth stage, *acceptance*. In this stage the message must be engaged with the consumers' beliefs and knowledge. Fifth and final stage is *retention* where the

message becomes part of the individual's long-term memory. (Pickton & Broderick 2001, 186-187) The noise can be defined as something which is bothering the communications process and might prevent the message from mediating to the consumers, such as competition and other advertisements.

Most marketing communication starts with companies and other organisations. Companies want to sell their products and services and this makes them to be the source. It is the corporate or brand name which appears in the message that identifies them as the sender. Publicity is an exception to this. Even though it is the company itself or its PR agency that provides the information and ideas for the message the perceived source of these marketing communication messages are third parties, the media. Third parties bring integrity to the company's message and it is an important factor for consumers to find the sender to have integrity. The extent to which a message sender is believable is called source credibility. (Duncan 2005, 109) Marketing communications clearly involves much more than merely placing as many adverts as possible in as many places as possible. The message must key in to the consumer's existing thought patterns and patterns of belief. It is more important to spend more money creating the right message than on buying media space to expose the message to the public. (Pickton & Broderick 2001, 186-187)

3.2 The Changing Marketing Communications Environment

For companies the environment represents the starting point of an action and the situation is made challenging by the fact that it keeps changing (Bergström & Leppänen 2004, 54). Mass-media advertising as we know it is on its deathbed. Direct marketing, sales promotion, the Internet, and other "in-touch" new forms of interactive media have taken centre stage. These communication sources break through the clutter and provide information value to customers and prospects. (Weinstein & Johnson 1999, 109) The marketing environment is a complex set of interacting people, processes, situations, and technologies, including the marketing corporation, which can significantly impact upon the nature and performance of the business enterprise (Varey 2001, 96). No longer is it enough to know how to do things but nowadays the effective communicator needs to

know what to do and why and how to evaluate its effectiveness (Smith 2004, 1). Organisations need to be aware of what is happening in the surrounding environment in order for them to be able to meet the demands and challenges the environment creates for them (Bergström & Leppänen 2004, 53). Organisations also need to adapt constantly in response to never ending environmental change. The investigation and analysis of the environment is fundamental to organisational well-being because the environment provides the context in which all marketing communications and business activities in general, take place. It is this environment which has shaped the marketing communications industry and its operations as they are known today. (Pickton & Broderick 2001, 101)

Professionals used to be called upon mainly for tasks such as writing news releases, making speeches, producing videos, publishing newsletters, organizing displays and so on. Now the profession demands competency in conducting research, making decisions and solving problems. The call now is for strategic communicators. (Smith 2004, 1) When developing marketing communications plans it is necessary to undertake a detailed analysis of all the relevant environmental variables that might influence the success of the plan (Pickton & Broderick 2001, 101).

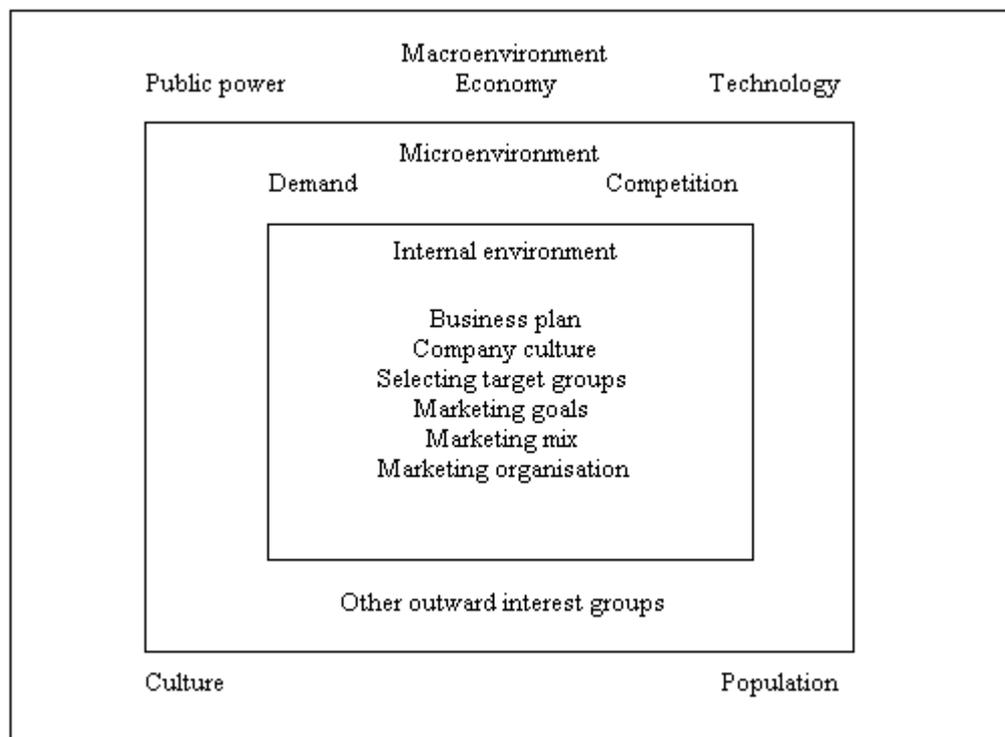


Figure 3: Company's marketing environment (Bergström & Leppänen 2004, 53).

Marketing environment stands for the inner and outer factors which influence the marketing of a certain company. For example business plans, corporate culture, goals of marketing and marketing organisation are inner factors and outer factors include culture and technology. (Bergström & Leppänen 2004, 54) From the marketing point of view the environment can be assessed and divided into micro- and macro-environments.

The *macro-environment* is described as the wider environment of a company and nothing can be done to prevent its development into something else than what it already is (Bergström & Leppänen 2004, 54). The macro-environment has a great influence on the ability of the corporate members to fulfil their ambitions that they can apply on the more distant elements of the environment (Varey 2001, 96). As stated before, the environment changes continuously and nothing can be done to prevent this. All that can be done is to change with it. CCBI is developing their business, marketing activities and equipment as the environment develops and changes with time. This is done in order to be able to meet the customers' ever-changing needs, as they do also change with the environment.

The *microenvironment* is the company itself and its close markets and it is controllable in managing marketing (Varey 2001, 96). In the microenvironment the factors that influence the company are very close to the company and its business and which the company can influence but not fully control (Bergström & Leppänen 2004, 54). CCBI welcomes competition because it keeps them on their toes, ready for changes and it also keeps them innovative. Competition is something CCBI cannot control but they can influence it by responding to their competitors marketing strategies by launching their own campaigns against the ones of their competitors.

CCBI conducts all business in a way that preserves and protects the environment. They are aiming to have a positive impact on the natural environment by implementing and sustaining good environmental practices. CCBI is committed to minimise the creation of their wastes and pollution and trying to continuously improve their environmental management system. As a business that produces, markets and sells products that consumers are enjoying every day, they are concerned that the careless disposal of their packaging could affect the environment for generations to come. Thus all of CCBI's packaging carries the Tidyman symbol, and their commitment to the environment is

demonstrated by their membership of REPAK and their support for environmental initiatives. (Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland)



Picture 2. REPAK logo and the Tidyman symbol. (Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland)

CCBI recognizes littering to be a behavioural problem and by carrying this symbol in their bottles they are committed and wanting to make a difference in people's behaviour.

Thus CCBI has been sponsoring National Spring Clean since 1999, it is Ireland's most popular and well-known anti-litter initiative and it aims to get people to take responsibility for litter by running clean-ups in their own local environment. CCBI is also supporting Green Schools, which is a European-wide environmental education programme that aims to promote and acknowledge action for the environment. This process helps students to understand and recognise the importance of environmental issues and to take them more seriously by reducing litter, waste and fuel bills. There are more than 1580 Irish schools currently participating in the programme. (Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland)



Picture 3. Logo's for National Spring Clean and Green-Schools –programmes. (Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland)

3.3 Marketing Communications Ethics

Marketing ethics has developed in the context of business ethics that reflects the interests of various stakeholders in the exchange process. It has been suggested that the moral issues in marketing are particularly important as marketing is expected to identify, anticipate and satisfy customer requirements profitably, thus creating and sustaining the line between consumer preferences and companies' market goals. Some of the problems in achieving a general agreement on ethics in marketing come from the lack of consistent arguments of what is "good" and "ethical" and whether they have identical meaning. (Carrigan 2005, 6) The moral question of what is right and/or appropriate poses many dilemmas for domestic marketers because even within a country the ethical standards are not defined or clear (Cateora 2000, 137). CCBI believes in following the highest ethical standards. They are aware that the quality of their products, the integrity of their brands and the dedication of their employees build trust and strengthen relationships. CCBI is acting responsibly when it comes to caring for their customers. They are aware of how their activities affect families and young people, thus they are committed to promote active lifestyles, particularly amongst young people. With the documented decline in the activity of young people, CCBI favours initiatives that help schools and communities promote active lifestyles. (Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland)

It can be argued that it pays off for companies to appear ethical, that their expectations of increased sales, market share and profitability would appear to be motivated by objectives other than self-interest. Such approach can bring more benefits to a firm because consumers will perceive its operations as ethical. Therefore, if companies appear to be following ethical codes and norms regulating their self-interest they will hopefully be rewarded by the consumers. The real issue is whether companies want to appear ethical or truly commit to a marketing behaviour that will place consumer and social welfare before their self-interest. (Carrigan 2005, 6) Parents, communities, government, the public health sector, and health care systems accordingly face the significant challenge of creating a supportive environment in which children can grow up in a way that maximizes their chances for a healthy life (McGinnis & Gootman 2006, 39). CCBI recognizes that the requirements of young people and the views of parents, teachers and stakeholders must be reflected in their approach to schools. CCBI

does not sell products directly to or display vending machines in any primary school in Ireland. When CCBI supports programmes in schools, it is the company's policy to focus on activities that promote physical activity and provide education about balanced nutrition and healthy lifestyles. This policy comes from their conviction that Coca-Cola has a key role to play in supporting health and nutrition programmes. They do not seek commercial arrangements with primary schools. (Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland)

4. INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS MIX

Marketing communications covers a range of promotional activities that are targeted towards one or more specified audiences. It follows that the greatest marketing communications impact will be achieved if all the elements involved are *integrated* into a unified whole. By integrating the range of promotional mix elements in order that they work in harmony or synergy with each other, opportunities are created to improve the effectiveness of the total marketing communications effort. While the marketing concept has supposedly always focused on consumer needs, the practice of *integrated marketing communications* (IMC) has provided the first major effort to really put the customer in the centre of the firm's marketing activities. The attempt to integrate, align and coordinate marketing communication programmes challenges many of the traditional organisational structures that have grown out of the industrial age. When implementing an IMC programme, many organisations have found that they literally have to turn the organisation upside-down, starting with customers and prospects, not products and services, and combining efforts from the customer point of view rather than from the view of the organisation. (Pickton 2001, 64) Great taste is not the only reason why Coca-Cola and other brands succeed. It is also thanks to CCBI's innovative and exciting marketing programmes. CCBI promotes its brands through sales promotions, advertising, public relations, packaging and sponsorship. (Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland) These campaigns are created in Ireland for Ireland, thus they are focused on and relevant to the Irish consumers.

4.1 Public Relations (PR)

A simple definition of public relations would be: the development and maintenance of good relationships with different publics (Smith 1998, 360). In many organisations public relations and marketing are operating separately from each others and have different goals, though they might have similar interests. The difference between marketing and public relations is their objectives. Where marketing and sales are trying to sell the organisations products, public relations attempt to sell the organisation itself. Usually they have responsibility for managing the corporate image whereas marketing manages the image of product brands. The distinction between the two is sometimes unclear, especially when the corporate name is the same as the brand name, like Coca-Cola. (Duncan 2005, 541) Public relations consist of activities that an organisation undertakes to communicate to its publics that are not paid for directly. The publics include customers, shareholders, investors, suppliers, distributors, government bodies, local communities, the media, employees and even competitors. Most medium and larger organisations have a public relations department in their head office. (Doyle 2002, 272) CCBI has public relations department at their Dublin plant and the CD Team is a part of their public relations department.

There are plenty of responsibilities which are taken care by the public relations department. Companies need to get *positive coverage in the media* (newspapers, journals and television) to give positive image and persuasive stories about the company, its people and products to the consumers. (Doyle 2002, 272) Public relations are more concerned with long-term image-building through numerous of activities, such as corporate publications, senior executive speeches, and financial support of worthy causes (Capon & Hulbert 2001, 389).

The PR mix, which can be seen from the figure four on the following page, gives an idea of the diverse nature and extensive effects of public relations. It is more than just communications; it is part of the broader business disciplines such as corporate planning, finance, personnel, production and marketing. It cannot work effectively unless it is integrated with these areas and also with product quality, customer care, and corporate identity. With these a company can build a functioning support for successful publicity, which is just one of many visibility tools, as can be seen from the figure. As

well as making good business sense, marketing, PR and corporate communications professionals are in the exciting position of being able to help improve their local communities, support valid causes, and improve the environment and much more. It makes long-term business sense to be ethical as it strengthens credibility that enriches all communications. (Smith 1998, 362)

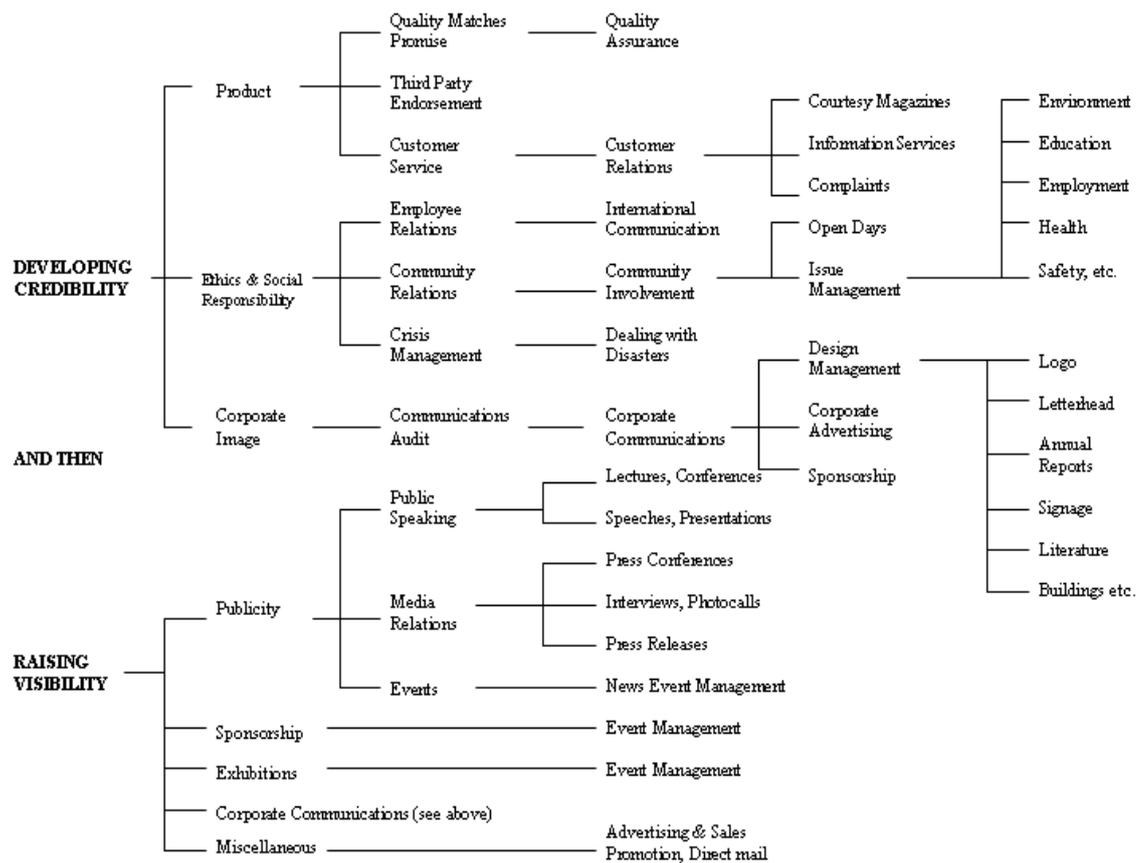


Figure 4. The PR Mix. (Smith 1998, 363)

Publicity and visibility should not be raised before a solid base of credibility has been developed through decent, safe products, friendly customer service, caring ethics and socially responsible policies. This means that the product must match the promise made by marketing communications, in other words CCBI cannot sell Coca-Cola and deliver Sprite. False expectations only lead to disappointment, frustration and high post-purchase dissonance, meaning that the consumers will buy elsewhere when their needs are not satisfied. It is important to have the right kind of people or institutions associated with a product because it can improve the credibility as well. So in a way ethics, social responsibility, and corporate image all contribute towards building a credible image. (Smith 1998, 364) As an example on how the model could easily be

adapted in planning an executing a marketing communications campaign the PR events could be organised by involving sales promotions, merchandise and exhibition activities. Personnel may be involved in hosting and in personal selling capacities. Direct mail may be used for invitations and publicity could accompany the events. Sponsorship would then support all of the above and advertising could be used to announce about the event. (Pickton 2001, 483)

This figure also shows how the visibility or publicity-generating activities such as news releases, news conferences, publicity stunts, conferences, events, exhibitions, sponsorship and sales promotions can all integrate in raising visibility for a company. CD Team is an excellent example of this. It is part of the public relations department and as mentioned earlier it is used to create awareness and visibility for CCBI. The CD Team is responsible for executing most of the activities seen on the figure above. The Events team is linked straight with for example sales promotion, exhibitions, sponsorship and events.

4.2 Sponsorships

Almost every public event is sponsored nowadays because it gives the marketers an ideal way to create brand interaction with consumers and stakeholders. Sponsorship can be explained as *financial support of an organisation, person, or activity in exchange for brand publicity and association between the sponsor's image, brands or products* and a sponsorship property in return for rights to promote this association. Sponsorship is the purchase (with cash or in-kind support) of exploitable rights and marketing benefits (tangible and intangible) that arise from direct involvement with a personality/player, special event, programme, club or agency. (Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris & McDonnell 2006, 228) Potential sponsors have a wide range of entities and activities from which to choose from, including sports, arts, community activities, teams, tournaments, individual personalities or events, competitions, fairs and shows. Sports sponsorship is by far the most popular sponsorship medium as it offers high visibility through extensive television press coverage and the ability to attract a broad cross-section of the community. Worldwide events, such as major football tournaments

create opportunities for global media coverage. Sponsorship of such events can provide brand exposure to millions of people. (Jobber 2007, 652)



Picture 4. Examples of Coca-Cola branding. (Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland)

It can be seen from the pictures above how Coca-Cola is getting visibility for its brands through media.

For many years Coca-Cola has been associated with sports, and physical activity has been featured in their advertising since 1886. CCBI is committed to promote active lifestyle especially for young people and it shows strongly in their support for under 14-year-olds hurling, rugby and handball competitions. They have a long-standing association with sport in Ireland, ranging from common initiatives to international sporting events. Through this support the company is aiming to encourage as many people as possible to lead a healthy and balanced lifestyle through their participation in sporting activities. (Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland) Children and youth represent an important demographic market because they are potential customers. They have a great influence on purchases made by parents and households, and they constitute the future adult market. (McGinnis & Gootman 2006, 138) It is important for companies to be clear about their reasons for spending money on sponsorship because the key of good sponsorship is to convey a caring and honest image for the consumers (Jobber 2007, 653).

CCBI is proud for its sponsorship with the Gaelic Athletic Association. It has been their first and longest-running sponsorship, and it is one of the company's key active lifestyle initiatives. One other highlight of the sporting calendar is the Coca-Cola International Rules Series. Sponsored by Coca-Cola since 1997, this cross-cultural game is a

combination of Gaelic and Australian Rules football, and is played every year alternating between Ireland and Australia.



Picture 5. International Rules Series -logo.

Coca-Cola also has strong links with rugby at all levels in Ireland. In 2004 Coca-Cola introduced Tag Rugby to over 300 primary schools throughout the country. At professional level, Powerade is the official sports energy drink of the Irish rugby teams.



Picture 6. Tag Rugby logo and an example of the game.

CCBI is also in association with the National Aquatic Centre, and together they launched the Learn to Swim Programme and the Coca-Cola Academy of Swimming. Coca-Cola was also one of the official worldwide sponsors of the 2004 Olympic Games in Greece.



Picture 7. Logo and an example of sponsorship.

Coca-Cola has also been associated with the Olympic Movement since 1928, and was a global sponsor of the 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games held in Ireland. It enables people with a learning disability to acquire the confidence and social and life skills that will help their inclusion in society through sport. Coca-Cola works in cooperation to execute promotions designed to create awareness and support for the organisation. (Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland)

Sponsorship has become a significant factor in the integrated marketing communication mix. It is said to be one of the most powerful mediums used to communicate and form relationships with stakeholders and markets. Sponsorship spending is increasing every year. (Bowdin etc. 2006, 228) Sponsorships both differentiate and add value to brands. Coca-Cola for example, has been a global sponsor of the Rugby World Cup since 1990 and all FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) and UEFA (the Union of European Football Association) football competitions because these games are well liked and respected by millions of consumers of the brand's target audience. The association with these sporting events helps *differentiate* Coca-Cola from other marketers of carbonated drinks and also helps to increase the status of the Coca-Cola brand. If a brand's consumers and prospects enjoy watching FIFA and UEFA events, presumably they will like the brands associated with their favourite team. (Duncan 2005, 613) Sponsorship is not a donation or a grant; it is a strategic marketing investment. This means that events and festivals are in a working business partnership with the sponsor of the event. Most sponsors are investors who are seeking profit for themselves; they are expecting direct impact on their brand equity, increased sales and profits. When it is a case of public sector sponsors, some kind of social marketing result is usually required. (Bowdin etc. 2006, 228)

Sponsorship of schools and supporting community programmes can encourage a socially responsible, caring reputation for a company. A survey in Ireland found that developing community relations was the most usual sponsorship objective for both industrial and consumer companies. (Jobber 2007, 655) In addition of sponsoring numerous athletic associations, CCBI also sponsors schools and community programmes. In 2002 CCBI became corporate sponsor of the Huston School of Film and Digital Media at NUI Galway. Their aim is to help develop the screenwriting and filmmaking talent and to establish Ireland as a centre of excellence for these talents. The

President's Award – Gaisce is the National Challenge Award from the President of Ireland to young people between 15-25 years of age and CCBI has been their sponsor since 1999. This is a non-competitive scheme where the participant agrees a challenge in four different areas of activity: an adventure activity, a personal skill or hobby, a physical activity and community involvement. When the participant has completed these challenges, he or she automatically receives this prestigious public award. (Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland) CCBI has also launched a campaign against drink driving, called Designated Drivers. The idea of this campaign is to offer up to three free Coca-Cola drinks for a person who is the designated driver and visits a pub with friends. It has proved to be quite successful around Ireland and it is believed to minimize the risk of accidents and drunk driving.

4.3 Advertising

Advertising can be explained as any form of *paid non-personal promotion or presentation of ideas, services or products* in the prime media, in other words television, newspapers, magazines, posters, outdoor advertising (billboards, toilets, bus shelters), cinema and radio, the Internet and direct marketing (Jobber 2007, 533). Advertising tends to affect awareness, interest and desire. Advertising is thought to help buyers to learn and remember brands and their benefits by repeating the message and building associations between brands, logos, images and benefits – a form of classical conditioning. (Smith 1998, 297) Although advertisement first impacts affect and cognition, the final goal is to influence consumers' buying behavior (Peter & Olson 2001, 424). Coca-Cola has created some of the most memorable, timeless and innovative advertising in the world. One advertising, which is global, and worth mentioning is the illustration of the Santa Claus. It was created in 1930's and is still used to this day.



Picture 8. The Santa Claus advertisement.

Advertising has many good qualities and when executed correctly, it can be extremely beneficial. Advertising has a large coverage, it can reach mass audiences and it is able to reach them selectively. With this it is meant that the targeting can be very decisive because generally it becomes very clear to whom the message is targeted. Advertising is also efficient and effective when it comes to reaching large audiences because it gives visibility to and awareness of brands to consumers. It also reminds and informs consumers about their choices and creates brand differentiation. Many argue that advertising is successful in brand management, but what is proven is that it is successful in brand maintenance. Above all of this is planning, because that determines whether or not these objectives will be achieved. (Pickton 2001, 458)

In creative advertising campaigns for events and festivals, it is vital to seek continuity over time by using recognizable symbols, spokespersons, trademarks or music (Bowdin etc. 2006, 219). For example CCBI used DJ Bobo's song "Chihuahua" in a series of Coca-Cola TV commercials after it had rocketed on the top of the UK pop charts in 1998. (Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland)

4.4 Merchandising

Product management is concerned with *presenting products within stores to their best advantage*. This can also be called merchandising. The key is to place the products so that they are easily noticeable and appealing for the consumers. (Varley 2001, 173) The face of the store is based on the choice of furniture's, the layout, store advertising and

the integration of these. The visual atmosphere and the shop design are important for creating a certain image for the store, thus it is also characterizing and one of the competitive advantages, if implemented in a correct manner. The store is meant to be refreshing, welcoming and strengthening the company's image. (Nieminen 2003, 221) With the help of merchandising, CCBI is sending out messages to the consumers about what can be expected from them and want to emphasize that CCBI's brand values are reflecting the shopping experience values of the consumers. Visual merchandising plays a much greater part in the product management process in some retail sectors than others. Even grocery superstores are using large amount of their resources to display because it is also a way of providing interest to the consumer and differentiating themselves from their competitors. (Varley 2001, 173)

In some retail organisations a team of brand managers coordinates the visual merchandising effort with other promotional activities, thus it becomes part of marketing activities. In fact, elements of visual merchandising, especially the use of point of sale material and photographic images, are sometimes referred to as 'in-store advertising'. For a long time visual merchandising was considered less of than promotions and advertisements. (Varley 2001, 173) For visual merchandising it is important that consumers can recognize what style and/or colour belongs to what product or brand. What consumers read from magazines, see on TV, hearing from the radio, the same headlines, slogans, campaign advertisements are to be seen at the stores, events or where ever the company is hoping to make a sale. (Nieminen 2003, 233) For example, when CCBI is implementing a marketing campaign and are having a certain advertisement on TV, they are also having the same slogan on sight in the stores, banners spread around various festivals and stickers changed to their vehicles. Visual merchandising at the implementation level is a creative activity and usually attracts people with a design training or background, although specific training for this aspect of retailing is becoming more common. (Varley 2001, 173)

In a competitive retail environment that is subject to international competition, visual merchandising is a way of communicating and differentiating the retail offer. It must be a central part of any strategy in which a retailer attempts to position or re-position the retail offer in the mind of the consumer. It is obvious that visual merchandising is frequently used by multiple retailers to strengthen the retail brand. (Varley 2001, 173)

CD team does merchandising as well, although it is in a somewhat different manner than what has been discussed above. For example, when a member of the team is sent to Croke Park to merchandise he or she needs to fill in the coolers, soda dispensers and the refrigerators in the changing rooms. It is a little more demanding than it sounds. The bottles have to be in a certain order: the first one and half shelves are filled with Coca-Cola and the other half with Diet Coke. The third shelf contains Sprite and Sprite zero, fourth shelf has Fanta, BPM and Fruice. The bottom shelf is filled with Deep Riverrock. This order never changes as the most important brand is to be seen first and it has to be stocked the most. The soda dispensers are just refilled and the refrigerators in the changing rooms have to have Powerade and Deep Riverrock. The merchandising in the stores is implemented by the sales people, who have their own guiding principles to follow through.

4.5 Sales Promotions

Companies have increased the use of sales promotions as it has been proven to be an efficient way to get consumers to use their products. Consumers have become more aware of what companies have to offer and what they are willing or affording to pay for the needed products themselves, thus they are looking for value for money promotions. (Smith 1998, 296) All marketing activities that stimulate consumer purchases and improve retailer or middlemen effectiveness and cooperation are sales promotions. In-store demonstrations, samples, coupons, gifts, product tie-ins, contests, raffles, sponsorship of special events, such as concerts and fairs, and point-of-purchase displays are types of sales promotion devices designed to complement advertising and personal selling in the promotional mix. (Cateora 2000, 384) Consumers are sometimes even expecting to be given promotions with certain product types, for example supermarkets give out samples of new products they have acquired or when a certain company is sponsoring an event they are expected to be handing out free bits and pieces. Some retailers favour suppliers whose products sell quickly for them to get rid of the products faster, shorten the product cycle time and acquire more profit. The products usually sell quickly because of their heavy advertising or exciting promotions.

The critical issue in selecting a particular sales promotion device is to be clear about the firm's sales promotion objectives. If short-term sales are required, then the "cents-off" coupons, cash refunds, point-of-purchase displays, and so forth may be appropriate, depending on the product class. On the other hand, if long-term image building is the goal, then sports sponsorships or naming buildings may have the desired result. Furthermore, individual sales promotion techniques may help achieve different objectives, depending on how they are used. Sometimes sales promotions are directed at consumers (samples, deals, coupons, games, prizes, point-of-purchase, cash refunds, sport sponsorships, product placement in movies and television shows), sometimes at retailers (deals, prizes, co-op advertising allowances), and sometimes at organizational customers (literature, advertising allowances, trade shows). Of course there are not a set number of techniques, rather new sales promotion devices are being developed all the time. (Capon & Hulbert 2001, 392)

High television advertising costs drive marketing managers to look for more cost-effective, below the line tools such as sales promotions. After paying for the adverts they want to make sure to achieve good sales figures and what better way to make consumers come to you than offering free samples, gifts and prizes. Many companies are also using member cards and members only –offers because they are eager to reward loyal customers in order to keep them. It is cheaper to try to keep old customers than acquire new ones. Rewarding loyal customers is a good way to tempt them to join a gym or purchase a new sofa by offering great deals, a free energy drink after workout, discounts or a gift after spending a certain amount of money in their shop. (Smith 1998, 296) Sales promotions generate an immediate action. Advertising viewers may flip the page or continue watching the game. Public relations events may make people feel good about the product. But promotion motivates people to do something; clip a coupon, enter a sweepstakes, purchase a value added offer, collect another stamp, reach a sales quota, open a new account, and other strategic activities. (Schultz 2004, 2)

Sales promotions are short-term efforts directed to the consumer and/or retailer to achieve such specific objectives as: (1) consumer-product trial and/or immediate purchase, (2) consumer introduction to the store, (3) gaining retail point-of-purchase displays, (4) encouraging stores to stock the product and (5) supporting and augmenting

advertising and personal sales efforts (Cateora 2000, 384). Sales promotions can be divided into three main categories; customer promotions, trade promotions and sales force promotions. Customer promotions can be premiums, gifts, prizes and competitions which are usually given when a purchase has been done and consumers are being persuaded to use the products again. Special terms, point-of-sale materials and free pens are trade promotions and they are given when a company is trying to seal the deal with the consumer, meaning that nothing has been bought yet and the company is trying to acquire new customers. By sales force promotions is meant incentives and motivation schemes, for example donating a holiday for the one who makes the biggest sale in the period of two months. (Smith 1998, 296)

The aim of promotions is to trigger an action, such as a purchase or increased usage of a particular brand. It doesn't matter whether they take the form of competitions, price reductions, free gifts, coupons, samples, special demonstrations, displays or point of sale, promotions are action orientated particularly as they often tempt the consumer to buy or at least try a product or a service. (Smith 1998, 296) In 2001 CCBI promoted Diet Coke Silver Bottle with a chance to win one of 10 credit cards loaded with money. It was designed to appeal young women in their twenties, which is the core market for Diet coke, and the promotion was fun, and aspirational, keeping with the playful nature of the brand. This promotion was supported by radio advertising as well as on-street sampling (executed by the CD Team) and promotional activity. (Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland)



Picture 9. Diet Coke Silver Bottle advertisement.

4.6 Personal Selling and Sales Management

Everyone does personal selling. Children sell lemonade and Christmas calendars. Doctors are trying to sell exercise and diet programs to patients. CCBI is trying to sell an entire lifestyle along Coca-Cola. The fact is that personal selling is *person-to-person interactive communication* used to persuade consumers to buy certain products or use certain services. Unlike advertising, promotion, sponsorship and other forms of non-personal communication, personal selling allows a direct interaction between buyer and seller. (Jobber 2007, 545) Personal selling and the management of the activities of personal selling is one of the key areas of the promotional mix. Not a long time ago personal selling was considered to be unimportant and it had somewhat doubtful reputation as a profession but now it has gained the respectability it deserves. (Pickton & Broderick 2001, 556) Because personal selling is a two-way communication it allows the seller to identify with the buyers needs and wants, thus he or she is able to adapt their sales presentation in the light of this information. Also the buyers concerns can be dealt with straight away. (Jobber 2007, 545)

Organizations own sales force has to be kept informed of any new advertising or sales promotion campaigns. Their product knowledge has to be kept excellent. Some advertisements are wasted when they succeed in pulling customers into stores only for them to find out that the sales staff is not familiar with the advertisement or the particular offer being made. Equally, salespeople may spend considerable time ensuring that wholesales and retailer point-of-sale materials are professionally coordinated with a national advertising campaign. (Smith 1998, 249) CCBI organizes training for its salespeople and for CD Team. Every month there is a meeting where important issues are dealt with and any new information related to new products, events and/or changes is shared with the members. Sales managers have been shown to have great influence on sales representatives and the process by which salespeople initiate, develop, and expand customer. Those same sales managers have been shown to influence a variety of outcomes, including sales force trust, morale, organizational commitment, ethical conduct, job stress, job performance, and the entire customer interface. (Deeter-Schmelz 2008, 1)

Personal selling has changed from transactional selling to relationship marketing. With transactional selling the emphasis is placed on achieving the sale and following the steps proposed to a successful sale whereas relationship marketing emphasizes the importance of relationship developed between an organisation and other parties, including customers, partners, suppliers and the trade. Companies have realized that it is cheaper to retain old customers than attracting new ones, thus they are truly nurturing their customer relationships. (Pickton & Broderick 2001, 556) At the same time personal selling is getting more challenging because of the rising customer expectations. When they experience high standards of product quality and service their expectations grow higher each time. Companies constantly need to raise the bar and extend the finish line. (Jobber 2007, 546)

CCBI has their sales force spread around the country. They believe this is helping them to achieve greater sales because having local people selling their products they have an advantage of knowing better what is needed. Local people know what is missing and they can offer good quality service faster than for the consumers to be calling other side of the country and be waiting for a reply. CCBI's sales force and CD Team are separate units as the sales force only sells the products whereas CD Team does other activities as well. There is not much interaction between them two as sales force is working under the sales department and CD Team belongs to the Public Relations department.

5. IMAGE AND BRAND MANAGEMENT

A brand can be defined as a *specific name, symbol or design* – or a combination of these – that is *used to distinguish a particular seller's product*. A supplier will then try to create awareness and preference among customers for its brand. Awareness can be created by developing a striking presentation of the brand and spending sufficiently on advertising and promoting it. Brands are at the root of marketing and business strategy because the purpose of marketing is to create a preference for a certain company's brand. If customers perceive one brand as superior, they will prefer it and pay more for

it. (Doyle 2002, 157-158) A brand has tremendous potential. It can be expressed in many different ways, it can represent many different value dimensions and it can be something the company nurtures and builds or exploits and neglects. However, regardless of what is built in to the brand, it remains in essence a symbol for a company. (Nilson 1998, 5-6)

A good brand represents trust which is an essential part of successful branding, not only from the perspective of the supplier but also from the customer because trust adds value to the relationship (Nilson 1998, 5-6). And in order to be a successful brand it has to create wealth by attracting new and retaining old customers. The specific characteristic of a *successful brand* is that, in addition to having a product which meets the functional requirements of consumers, it has added values which meet certain of their psychological needs. These added values are feelings of confidence that the brand is of higher quality or more desirable than similar products from competitors. (Doyle 2002, 157-158)

With an increasingly competitive marketplace, more and more companies have learned the importance of ensuring the quality of their products. They have implemented manufacturing systems designed to make products which enhance their brand image by providing satisfying customer experiences. These companies have developed total quality management (TQM) programs to ensure that they deliver the best quality products to their customers. The companies recognize the need to manufacture a product which will deliver on its intended performance. Companies also have recognized the importance of ensuring the effectiveness of their marketing programs. They have established a marketing planning system to develop messages which communicate a strong brand image. (Carrigan 2005, 6) The value of a brand is created by all the different activities the consumer will connect with the brand. This includes the product and/or service itself, marketing communication and all possible contacts with the company, such as sales personnel, receptionists, switchboard operators, and delivery personnel, even all employees who might, even if they work in the factory, meet consumers and influence the perception of the brand. (Nilson 1998, 26) CCBI has high standards when it comes to employees. They take pride in their achievements and in each others which strengthens the employees' relationships and loyalty for the company, thus providing a better working environment for everybody. CCBI believes

they are the sum of their employees together with their world-class brand names and modern operating systems. These are also the factors which are believed to ensure that they maintain their reputation as a market leader. (Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland)

Brand management is important to companies because they have to manage the reputation and the values tied to their name and symbols. It is not often that brand management is carried out by brand managers. In the European sense of the word brand managers are fairly young people who are trusted with developing and implementing marketing activities for a specific brand, or range of product and services under a brand. (Nilson 1998, 25) This could be adapted to CCBI. They have young people, aged between 18-25, working for them in the CD Team to promote their products and increasing brand awareness during events. Samplings are the best example to describe this because they are directed for making a new product or flavour known amongst consumers. The true management of the brand is carried out by senior managers, such as marketing managers and directors. This is not to fail to recognize the importance of brand managers because they can make a vast difference to a brand. Their main role is not to strategically manage the brand but to make things happen, drive the brand forward. (Nilson 1998, 25)

Successful brand management focuses on creating preference over others, ensuring that the products and/or services sold under the brand's values really are perceived as superior to those of the competitors; and that these products and services really offer the best perceived value for money as possible. When a brand represents superior value for money, the company has a distinct *competitive advantage*. It is essential to remember that the value for money proposition has to be delivered cost-effectively. The link to the symbol has to be clear and distinct, otherwise the competitive advantages have no identity and the consumers have no chance of finding the products and services. (Nilson 1998, 26)

With brand stretching it is meant the usage of a brand in a new product or service area. The appeal in stretching the brand lies in the economies of scale. If the brand can be used across more products, communication investments will be lower per sales unit and ideally one product will promote the other with the same brand. (Nilson 1998, 103) Fifty years ago The Coca-Cola Company sold only Coca-Cola. Since then, the product

innovation has been at the heart of CCBI's commercial success. Today Coca-Cola Company is offering more than 400 different brands and thousands of different packaging sizes around the world. Each individual has different needs and makes choices everyday. To maintain a healthy lifestyle people need to balance their overall consumption of food and drink with their activity levels. Many people in Ireland drink Coca-Cola as a part of a balanced diet, and it is important for CCBI to be aware of the individual needs of their consumers and offer them an ever expanding choice of refreshing products. (Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland)

This next example will demonstrate the importance and power that a brand can behold. A panel of consumers was asked to taste Coke and Pepsi. In blind tests, where the brand identity was concealed, 51 per cent preferred Pepsi and 44 per cent Coke whereas in an open test, where brand identities were shown, preferences were completely reversed: 65 per cent preferred Coke and only 23 per cent Pepsi. Such tests often provide striking illuminations of the power of brand names. (Doyle 2002, 160)

A brand image refers to how the target market perceives the brand. A brand identity is the message sent out by the brand through its product form, name, visual signs, advertising, etc. The two are often different: what image people have of the brand can be quite different from the message that the company is seeking to communicate. (Doyle 2002, 163) A positive brand image is formed by generating strong, favourable and unique associations to the brand in the memory, thus it increases the likelihood of purchase (Jobber 2007, 332). Management should plan the brand's identity, since this is the key to acceptance in the market. To help managers plan and analyse a brand's identity, the dimensions of the brand need to be described. Kapfferer introduced the concept of the brand pyramid, consisting of three tiers (figure 5). Its fundamental or genetic code is the brand core, which remains fixed over time. The middle tier of the pyramid is the brand style, which articulates the brand core in terms of the culture it conveys, its personality and its image or self-projection. The base layer of the pyramid is the brand themes, which are how the brand currently communicates through its advertising, press releases, packaging, etc. Themes include the physical appearance of the product (colour, logo, packaging), its reflection (e.g. type of spokesperson used to advertise the brand) and the relationship expressed (e.g. glamour, prestige). Brand

themes are more flexible than the brand style and core, and will change with fashion, style and technology. (Doyle 2002, 164)

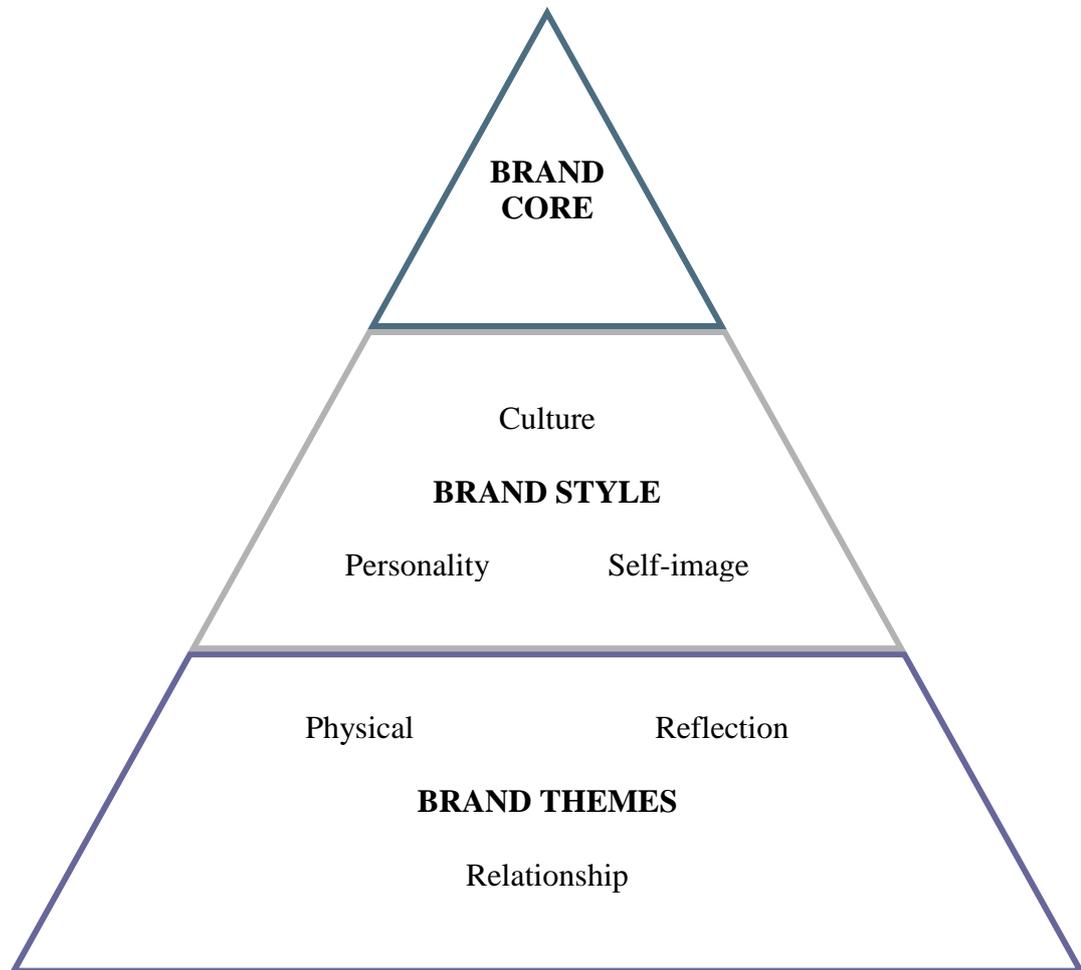


Figure 5: The brand identity and brand pyramids. (Doyle 2002, 164)

Marketers segment target audiences by age, gender and race/ethnicity to build brand awareness and brand loyalty early in life that will be sustained into adulthood (McGinnis & Gootman 2006, 139).

6. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

6.1 Purpose of the Study

Aim of the study was to find out how the case company Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland benefits from having a Consumer Demand Team. Additionally, objective of the study was to research how the Team members are experiencing the importance of the Consumer Demand Team. The emphasis is strongly on marketing communications because it explains the responsibilities of the Team within Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland.

It was also thought to research the possibility of the CD Team to exist in Finland, whether the Finnish beverage companies already have a similar team or could they benefit from having one. This second objective was created because the first objective could not be researched as well as it was intended in the beginning. This would also link this research to Finland and make it more up to date.

6.2 Research Objectives

- Benefits which Consumer Demand Team brings for Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland
 - How Team members are experiencing the need for Consumer Demand Team?
 - What are the Consumer Demand Teams overall functions?
- Could this concept be utilised in Finland?

6.3 Conceptual Framework

In this research it was studied what are the benefits Consumer Demand Team brings for Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland. Conceptual framework for the study has been modified to

meet the objectives of the research from a book of Integrated Marketing Communications by David Pickton and Amanda Broderick 2005.

Starting point of the conceptual framework is the marketing communications context; who is sending the message, what is the message, which media encodes the message and to whom the message is meant to. Image and brand management also have an affect on consumers buying decisions, whether the company's values meet the ones of the consumers. The receiver response on the other hand affects brand equity and the whole marketing communication process, which is in turn affected by the customer relationship management.

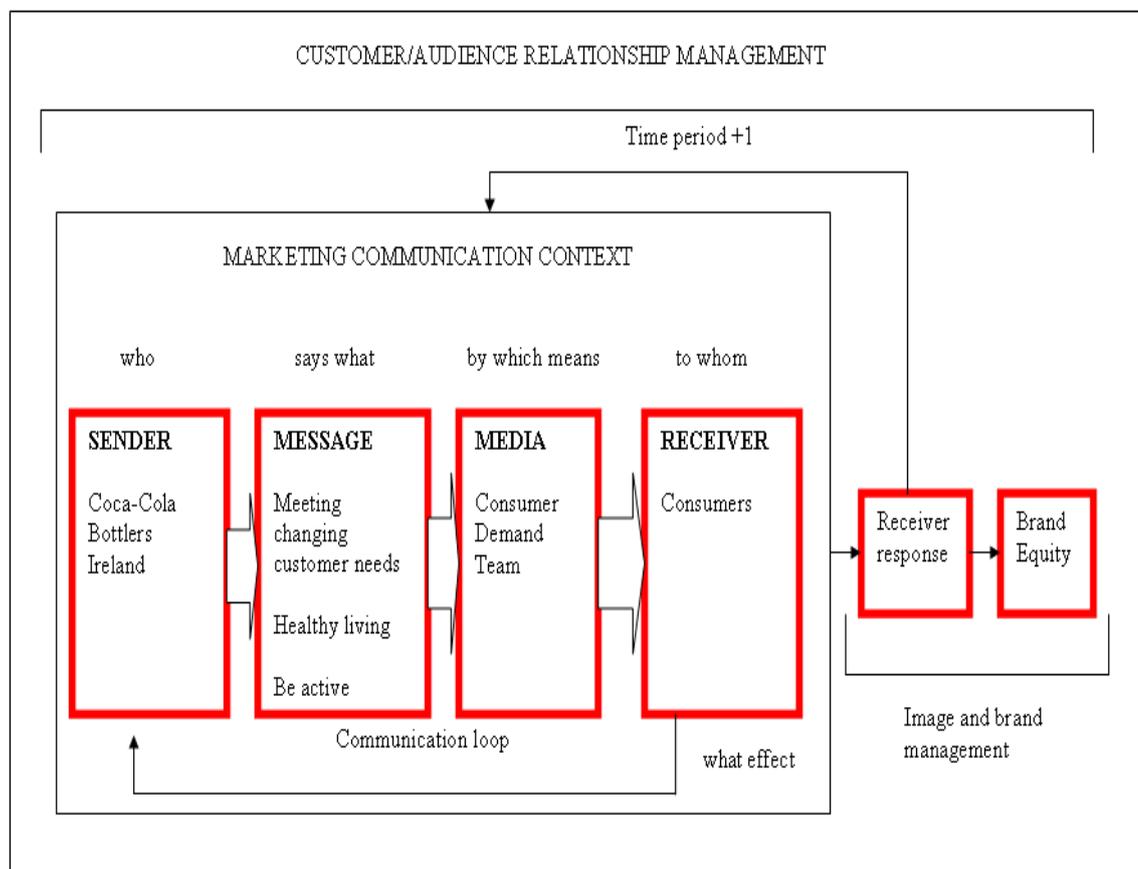


Figure 6: The Conceptual Framework. Integrated Marketing Communications Process Model (adapted from Pickton & Broderick 2005, 7)

7. Conducting the Study

In this chapter, the methodology of the research is described. First the quantitative and qualitative research approaches are introduced. Then the methods used in this bachelor's thesis are being discussed, after which the validity and reliability of this study are being considered.

7.1 Research Methods

A method is a systematic and orderly approach taken towards the collection of data so that information can be obtained from those data (Jankowicz 1995, 172). Research methods are consisted of habits and practices, which are used to collect observations on a subject in question. These observations should be critically analysed and evaluated because the final conclusions are based on them. The quality of knowledge and where or from whom the knowledge has been gotten from are all affecting the choice of the research method. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2000, 170-171)

Methods for gathering data can be grouped into two main categories: theoretical research methods and empirical research methods. The material in the theoretical research consists of previous studies done on the subject. The information exists, and the target of the information gathered is usually in the concepts, perspectives and theories concerning the division of study. The focus of the empirical research comes from the outside world and the data needs to be gathered by a logical method. (Uusitalo 1991, 89-95) In many cases, the design of the research will have suggested the use of one or more particular research approach. However, it is worth to consider all available research methods, their specific advantages and disadvantages and their suitability to the research question before starting to collect the data. (Brewerton 2001, 67) The methods used in gathering the empirical can be categorized into two groups: quantitative and qualitative methods (Jankowicz 1995, 173). It is important to include both quantitative and qualitative research in the conducted study, since both of these research types provide different kind of information. Both of these approaches use the same sort of

information gathering methods, such as inquiries, interviews, questionnaires and other documents. (Zeithaml & Bitner 2003, 126)

7.1.1 Quantitative Research Methods

Essential characteristics for quantitative research are conclusions made in previous researches, prior theories, presenting hypotheses, and making assumptions based on statistic analyses. Quantitative methods are research techniques used to gather quantitative data; meaning information dealing with numbers and anything that is measurable. (Hirsjärvi etc. 1997, 136) Quantitative research answers to questions such as *what*, *how many* and *how often*. It can be used when studying correlations and changes in certain phenomenon's, which the methods seek to describe by using numerical data. Additionally, results can be demonstrated as statistics, tables and graphs. (Heikkilä 1999, 15-16)

7.1.2 Qualitative Research Methods

Qualitative research involves analysing and interpreting texts and interviews in order to discover meaningful patterns descriptive of a particular phenomenon (Auerbach 2003, 3). In qualitative research the data is obtained from a relatively small group of respondents and not analysed with statistical techniques (Jankowicz 1995, 173). Qualitative research gives an in-depth understanding of the research because it is not confined to a limited data such as quantitative research. The foundation of qualitative research is describing real life. It favours methods which allow the respondents views to be brought out. (Hirsjärvi etc. 2000, 152) Qualitative findings are based on three kinds of data collection: (1) in-depth, open-ended interviews; (2) direct observation; and (3) written documents. *Interviews* give direct quotations from people about their experiences, knowledge, opinions and feelings. The data from *observations* consist of detailed descriptions of people's activities, behaviors, and actions. *Document analysis* includes studying fragments, quotations, or entire courses from organizational, clinical

or program records, correspondence, official publications and reports, personal diaries, and open-ended written responses to questionnaires and surveys. (Patton 2002, 4)

Based on the qualitative strategy, qualitative research is interplay between the respondent and the researcher. This means that interviews, for example, are the result of an interaction because the researcher might influence the respondent. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2001, 23) The quality of qualitative data depends to a great extent on the methodological skill, sensitivity, and integrity of the researcher (Patton 2002, 5). A talented researcher does not mix his or her own beliefs, attitudes or values with the respondents because that would change the outcome of the research (Hirsjärvi etc. 2000, 152).

7.1.3 Methods Used in this Study

A qualitative research method was chosen for this research because the aimed end results needed answers from the respondents which were explained with their own opinions, attitudes and experiences, thus a closed questionnaire with ready made options in boxes would not have done the job. They would have left no room for the respondents to include their own interpretations of the issues that came up in the questionnaire, and it would have damaged the reliability of the research.

The research also involved a limited amount of respondents, which would not have been enough to give reliable results if a quantitative research would have been executed. Although the first two questions are easily interpreted with using statistics, the research remains qualitative.

7.2 Collection of Data

There is a difference between data and information. Data is specific, undigested and thus meaningless, whereas information is what is gotten when data has been arranged so that uncertainty has narrowed, queries solved and all the questions have been answered. (Jankowicz 1995, 172) Questionnaire and survey measures are probably the most widely used research tools within the social sciences. Their low cost, minimal resource requirements and potentially large sample-capturing abilities make them an attractive research method. (Brewerton 2001, 99) One has to be careful when forming questions for questionnaires, because they create the foundation for the success of the research. The form of questions causes the most errors in research results, because if the respondent is not thinking the question in the way the researcher meant it, then the results are distort. (Aaltola & Valli 2001, 100)

The design of a questionnaire differs according to how it is administered and the amount of contact there is with the respondents. *Self-administered questionnaires* are usually completed by the respondents. These type of questionnaires are delivered and returned electronically using either email or the internet (on-line questionnaires), posted to respondents who return them by post after completion (postal or mail questionnaires), or delivered by hand to each respondent and collected later (delivery and collection questionnaires). Most types of questionnaire include a combination of open and closed questions. Open questions (*open-ended questions*) involve asking a question of the respondent and allowing them to respond as briefly, or as comprehensively, as they like, in their own way. (Brewerton 2001, 116) Closed questions (*closed-ended questions*) provide a number of alternative answers from which the respondent is instructed to choose from (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2003, 292-293).

There are many good reasons for a researcher to choose a questionnaire as a data collection method. When the research is done with using a questionnaire the researcher has no effect to the responses, in contrast to interviews where pauses between words or the tone of the researchers' voice might have an impact of the respondents' answers. In a questionnaire can be many questions and the questions are presented in the exact same form for each respondent, which also increases credibility of the research. (Aaltola & Valli 1995, 101) Sometimes questionnaires are considered to be too shallow and there is

no guarantee that the respondents have taken the research seriously, have they answered truthfully or made them up. With questionnaires it cannot be known how well the respondents are aware of the certain issues being asked. It is difficult to control misunderstandings. There is always a risk of not receiving some or most of the questionnaires, because not everyone is interested in filling forms, thus the response rate might be left low when comparing to all the questionnaires sent out. (Hirsjärvi etc. 2000, 190)

The theoretical data gathering was done by using sources found relevant to the subject, such as books and magazines. Critical assessment, of especially Internet based sources, was used in order to have reliable sources in the research. The self-administered questionnaire was chosen for this research as the target groups were outlined to consist only of the employees working for Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland, as the company is situated in Dublin, Ireland, and the research is done from Finland. Thus it would have been extremely difficult to interview consumers to find out how visible the Consumer Demand Team is for them in reality.

Making and formulating the questionnaire quickly proved to be the hardest part of the research as it was difficult to have it approved by Mo Durkan, the Public Affairs and Communications Manager. She thought the questions were too personal and something only their Human Resources Department would have the right to inquire. Sheryl Graham, the Events Team Manager, pointed out that CCBI does not want the members of the Team to give out any criticism or negative answers to any outside interest groups, as it might harm the company in the long run. Thus she would not allow the members to answer the questionnaire. The first version of the questionnaire was made in September 2006. It had eleven questions and only three got approval from the management (see Appendix 1, approved questions are numbers one, two and ten). This first questionnaire included questions about the management as one of the objectives was thought to research whether there were any improvements the management could carry out, what was not working as it should have and what was good about the management. As it can be seen, this objective was soon changed as it was not approved. The questionnaires were sent via email as it was the cheapest and quickest alternative. They were sent to Sheryl Graham, who forwarded them to Mo Durkan, since she was the one who made the ultimate decisions. The Team members were asked to either send the responses

directly to the researchers email or to return them to the Team Leaders, who would forward them to the researcher. Only one of the respondents send the questionnaire directly to the researcher, others came from the Team Leaders.

The first questionnaire for the Team Members was formulated before any of the theoretical data was gathered. It was thought best to collect information from various sources and then try again with a new questionnaire. Maybe some new aspects would appear as some of the theory had been collected. The second questionnaire was sent to CCBI in March 2007 (see Appendix 2). At the same time it was asked for the permission to interview the Team Leaders and the Team Manager. Also the other departments of CCBI, such as Finance, Human Resource Management and Sales, were the target of the initial research plan, but that rapidly changed after the head of the Public Relations Department, where Consumer Demand Team belongs to as stated earlier in the theory part of this research, decided for it to be unnecessary. Unfortunately they limited the research to include only the members of the Consumer Demand Team, which also narrowed the objectives of this research.

It took a long time to get any answer from CCBI, as to whether they approved the second questionnaire or not. There were several emails send to the managers and phone calls were made but without any answers. Due to this it was decided to contact the Finnish beverage companies, Hartwall and Sinebrychoff, in order to find out whether this same concept was used in Finland and if not, what other marketing strategies they were using (see Appendix 3). This was done to be able to linkage the research to Finland, thus making it more current and topical in Finland. It was unlucky for this research that the companies were not in liberty to reveal their marketing strategies to any outside interest groups.

CCBI finally answered back in April after many attempts of contacting them. The second questionnaire was approved, with a few changes from their part. They had removed two questions from the questionnaire (see questions number five and seven from the Appendix 2), without any notice, and already given them out to the Team Members. There was no possibility of adding, changing or coming up with new questions. CCBI wanted the survey to be finished with, as was the explanation to why they had done all that without informing the researcher.

It was promised to send the responses as soon as they were completed, and the time given to respond was three weeks. One of the Team Members had sent the filled questionnaire directly to the researchers email two weeks after this and it was not until two months later as the email containing the rest of the responses was received. During this time CCBI was contacted to enquire about the state of the questionnaires and every time the response was the same: they would be sent back immediately. There were 20 Team Members in the CD Team during that time and only 13 responses got back. That makes the response rate to be 65 per cent of total 100 per cent. There was nothing to be done to improve the response rate as there was no contact from CCBI after this.

7.3 Validity and Reliability

Validity, also known as competency, determines whether the research truly measures what it was intended to measure and how truthful the research results are. The study conducted among the respondents was designed to ask the questions needed to answer the objectives of the study. Some additional information was needed from the management of CCBI, and since it was not received, that somewhat affects the validity of this study. *Reliability* is measured best by how well the result of the research will regenerate if the research would be conducted a second time. The reliability of this research can be measured only by the knowledge of what the researcher has on the subject since she was working for CCBI herself. (Hirsjärvi etc. 2000, 226-227) The validity and reliability of the collected data and the achieved response rate depend on the design of the question and the structure of the questionnaire. A valid question will enable accurate data to be collected, and data that is reliable means that it has been collected consistently. (Saunders etc. 2003, 291) Basically this means that the respondent must understand the questions in the way that the researcher intended and vice versa.

Any *contamination* of respondents' answers will reduce the reliability of the collected data. Sometimes they might have insufficient knowledge or experience, and then they are more likely to deliberately guess the answer. Respondents to self-administered

questionnaires are relatively unlikely to answer to please the researcher or because they believe certain responses are more socially desirable. (Saunders etc. 2003, 283) The reliability of qualitative research can be improved by the researcher's exact description of how the study was conducted, this implies to all different phases of the study (Hirsjärvi etc. 2000, 227). There were few questions which were left unanswered in the questionnaires and by the type of questions it could be thought that the Team members were not bothered to answer properly and did not put that much effort in to answering them. This affects the reliability of this research as it suggests that some of the questions might be made up or have just been answered yes or no, which gives insufficient amount of information for the researcher to analyse their opinions. There were also quite few of the answer sheets which seemed too similar. By this it could be concluded that some of the answers were copied from someone else. There might be a chance that the management did not send back all of the completed questionnaires if they had some negative issues in them, since CCBI did not want that kind of information to be given out. Also the fact that the management was able to read the answers might have affected to the type of answers written down, because the Team members did not want to give negative feedback if they knew it could be read by their manager. All of these reasons listed above are affecting the reliability of this research.

8. Research Findings

The self-administered questionnaire consisted of ten questions, out of which only eight was approved by the management. The first two questions are to distinguish the age and gender of the respondents, which are illustrated in the form of pie charts. Remaining questions will be analysed one by one in order to keep them as separate issues. The questionnaire was sent to 20 team members and 13 of them answered back, which brings the response rate to 65 per cent out of the total 100 per cent.

First question was to find out the respondents age and to see whether there was any significant difference between the answers of team members who were younger in

contrast for the older ones and if this could have any impact for the research. In the chart below it can be seen the amount and percentage of how many members there are of certain age, for example there was only one person 18 years old.

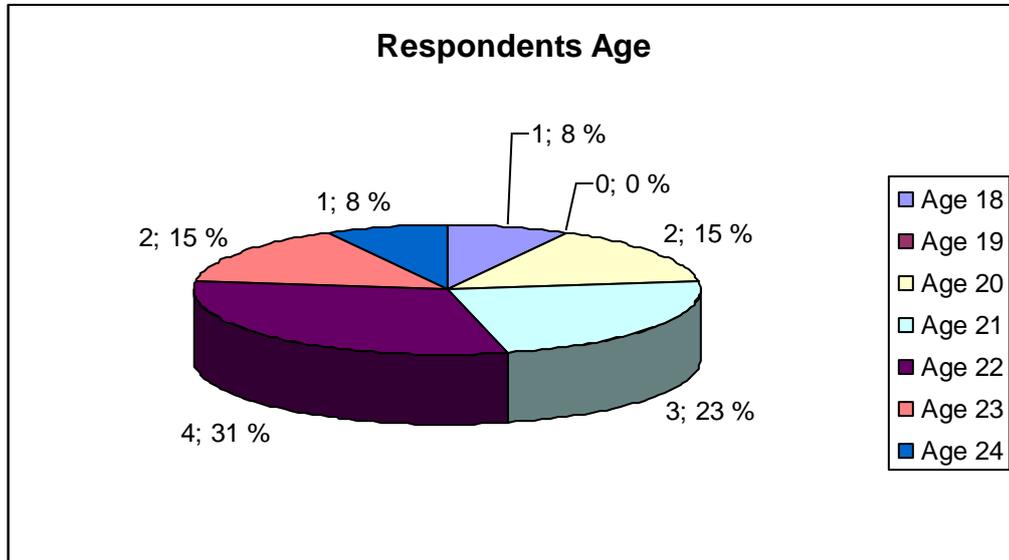


Figure 7. Respondents' age.

The gender of the respondents was also inquired to see if there were any significant differences between the answers because for certain assignments CCBI prefers to send either girls or boys. For example, if a delivery of beverages needs to be made to another town CCBI usually assigns boys to carry it out because they are considered to have more strength to move the crates and also preferred to drive long distances. And for organizing play dates for children they prefer to send girls for these types of assignments because it is considered that girls are more willing and interested in playing with the children than boys.

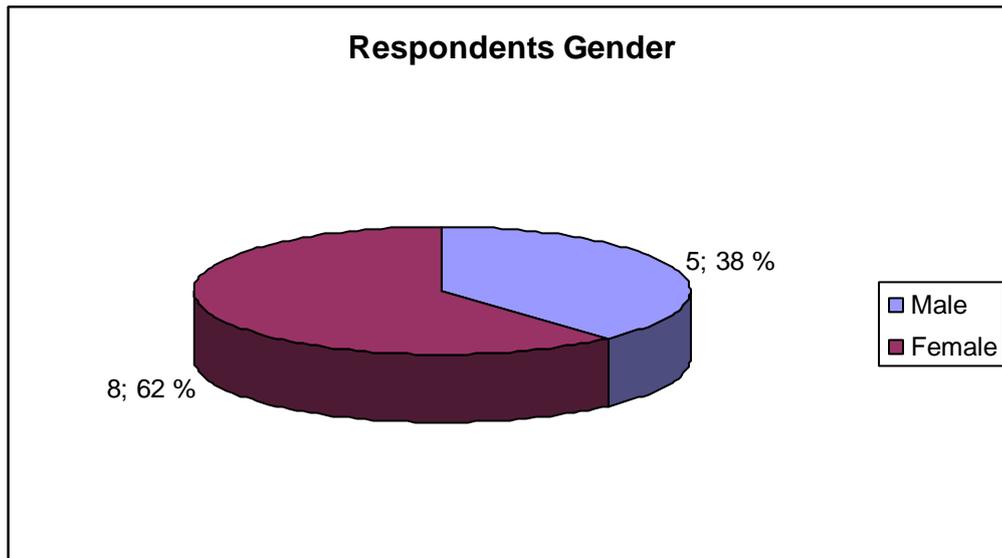


Figure 8. Respondents' gender.

Why do you think it is important for companies, like Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland for example, to have a CD Team or something similar to promote their products?

All the respondents were unanimous as they stated how it was important for companies to have a promotional team working for them and making their products known among consumers and competitors as well. Having an inside house promotional team, such as CD Team, which is dedicated to execute the various marketing and promotional assignments is a guarantee that the products are being promoted with better commitment to the product since promotion is exactly what the team is for. The team members are trained to have sufficient knowledge about the variety of products, how to handle and lift the crates correctly, how to set-up the equipment and advertisements for the events, dress accordingly and to use only CCBI's products while on an assignment. All of this makes the quality of work more manageable and better than if CCBI was using an outsourced service for executing their advertising and promotions.

The CD Team was also considered to improve the image of the CCBI. This is done through good customer service. Knowing the products and the company CD Team is able to offer excellent customer service which will be remembered for a long time. The happy and knowing service attitude remains in the consumer's mind and hopefully will attract them to use CCBI's services next time as well. People also remember the

product better if they have a “face” to go with it and this makes the CD Team an important tool for CCBI since they are in direct interaction with consumers. The managers are also ensuring for the members that CD Team is the face for CCBI as they usually are the first ones to have any interaction with the consumers through various events. One of the main functions of the CD Team is to increase brand awareness among consumers and this is also the reason why the CD Team drives Coca-Cola jeeps and vans and has a work uniform with brand logos all over them.

In my opinion companies receive more benefits than losses from having a promotional team working for them. In addition to everything that is mentioned above, the CD Team enables the sales, marketing and public relations departments to concentrate on more important issues than for example deciding on what banners to use during events and how to brand a football arena. The work that CD Team does is mainly suitable for young people, thus CCBI only hires students aged between 18 to 24 year olds. These people have the energy to work long hours during festivals and organise play dates for children. This is the type of work many young people enjoy doing, because they get to have fun at the same time. It is fun working with people who are around the same age and when one likes the work one is doing it also affects the service offered to consumers because the atmosphere is happy and relaxed.

When working in a team like CD Team do you think it is important to have prior knowledge about marketing, sales and promotion? Please specify your answer.

This question clearly divided opinions between the respondents about whether prior knowledge is important or not. Six of the respondents thought it had no relevance what so ever whether you did or did not have prior knowledge about marketing and sales. The activities within CD Team were considered to be easy enough to learn as they went along with the different assignments given by the management. There was only one who thought it was important to have some prior knowledge because it would help the members of CD Team to sell CCBI’s products more efficiently if the basic theories of marketing, sales and promotion were familiar. It was reasoned by the fact that people will trust the quality of the product better when they are dealing with professionals who know what they are selling and who are able to give needed formation about the

products. It was also considered important for the CD Team to be able to explain certain issues concerning CCBI and its brands.

Other half of the respondents thought it was an advantage to know the basics of marketing but not a necessity as it can be learned quickly and easily. A good marketing minded attitude was considered to be the most important issue. Knowing the theory behind marketing, sales and promotion can be useful when planning and executing the various campaigns that CCBI has. The brands that belong to CCBI are well known and are basically selling themselves but there are some “special” customers, for example some have allergies and are not allowed to consume certain food and drink, which need special attention and knowledge. There are also consumers who have not used CCBI’s products, thus it is important to know how to sell them something they have never used before. Coca-Cola is already a well-known brand around the world and people have formed their own opinions about the product a long time ago. Thus their opinions are not changed by the way CD Team executes their campaigns or how they sell Coca-Cola. The most important is to know the people, understand them and deliver what they want and need when they want it.

I have to agree with the fact that most important is to know people. This is the kind of work where it is necessary to be outgoing, hardworking and like people. Sometimes the hours can be very long and the days will stretch, thus it is important to keep in mind that it is a field of customer service. One has to be ready to serve the customers, even though one would be hungry, tired or cold. All of the assignments that CD Team has concerns communication with the consumers and it is not done effectively if one is not a people person.

*Do you find it important for companies to sponsor these different types of events?
Please specify your answer.*

All the respondents found sponsoring events extremely important for companies, especially for CCBI. Coca-Cola is an international brand and by sponsoring events it can improve their image by giving it more value. Especially sponsoring young children’s events can improve companies’ social status and help them share their company values to the consumers. Sponsoring different type of events also gives profit

for companies, because through it all they are getting more visibility and recognition for their brands and products than by just selling them in stores. It can help the consumers to remember the product better and the company as well because it will be associated with the events. If the event that CCBI is sponsoring for is great in the minds of consumers it gives CCBI's products a positive stamp on them. They might even start buying more of the product because that will help them remember the event better which makes them feel good.

Sponsorship of events improves the public image of a company as it is seen giving back to the community and also helps align the brand with the desired image, for example PowerAde's sponsorship of the Irish Rugby team leads to an association of PowerAde with sports, especially Rugby. This has proven to be effective in Ireland where rugby is considered to be one of the most interesting and popular sport. Sponsorship is also a good way for CCBI to show how much they care for their community and that it is ready to help improve the quality of life, especially those of young children. Sponsorship is not only good because of the good image companies receive for being able to increase their visibility, but also because events need sponsors and without sponsors there are no events. Sponsorship is about doing good business, not only for the companies themselves but also for the public. Visibility in big events and sports is important so that the company is linked to positive issues and events. Since Coca-Cola is a well-known and successful brand, a co-operation with them leads to a better profit since it can increase the amount of visitors because CCBI has the resources to make the event bigger or to advertise it more widely.

Sponsorships are a great way to get companies active. I think it is important for CCBI or companies in general, to sponsor events which reflect their own attitudes and beliefs as it will reinforce their image and change consumers' opinions about the company or its products. These events need to be selected carefully as it can do real damage if the public does not accept the sponsored event or happening. Consumers often link positive associations with their favourite products, thus by choosing the right channels sponsorships can help create these positive images.

Do you feel that by having a CD Team Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland has a competitive advantage over their competitors? Please specify your answer.

Almost all the respondents thought CD Team gives CCBI a competitive advantage as they bring more visibility during events and when using the CCBI's jeeps. Three of the respondents had left this question unanswered and the other three had just written "yes" on the answer sheet.

Coca-Cola is a well-known brand and has many competitors, such as Pepsi Co, thus any advertising and promotion, even if seen as "extra", is considered to be an advantage for CCBI. The branded jeeps and uniforms are thought to increase brand awareness among consumers and the members seem to think that by wearing the uniforms every working hour and driving around the city with the jeeps it helps them to advertise the company in a good light. By this it is meant that CCBI cares for their appearance and conveys clean and clear messages to consumers. It was also stated that the competitors do not seem to have a similar promotional team, which in turn makes CD Team a great advantage for CCBI as they are reaching more consumers around Ireland than their many competitors. The CD Team is thought to bring a different kind of commitment to promoting than the competitors have since they are specially trained for their work.

The CD Team enables CCBI to get pouring rights at outdoor concerts and festivals, as they have a team in place to carry out the task. All the vendors that participate to the events must buy their beverages from the CCBI. The CD Team then delivers the crates to the various vendors, who in turn sell them to the consumers. This happens in every event CCBI takes part in and this is what is meant with the pouring rights. That is also the same reason why there are none of the competitors' products on sale in these areas. The CCBI's products will be remembered better by the consumers than the competitors after big events because they are the only ones getting any visibility through these events.

The team has the best attitude and great people. There is a reason why CCBI wants to hire young, attractive and outgoing people to work for their CD Team. CCBI advertises healthy lifestyle and sponsors events that are ethically correct. The events also need to have a specific goal for helping the community, improving the quality of life or creating

alternatives for young children, to keep them from doing harm etc. What better way to promote their products than through a young, attractive and athletic CD Team.

There was only one respondent who thought the CD Team in the means of how much money it brings for the CCBI. The CD Team was thought to be profitable as long as the products are selling well at the events so that it would be affordable to be paying salaries for the team members.

It is clear that CCBI has competitive advantage over its competitors. The more people there are promoting and selling their brands, the more visibility and money it brings for the company. In my opinion one of the greatest competitive advantages CCBI has are the events, because the only beverages being sold belong to Coca-Cola. There are no competitor products available, since CCBI has kind of a monopoly. It is agreed with the organisers of the events that CCBI provides all the beverages, the other retailers are buying drinks from CCBI and then selling them forward to their customers.

How could a company, like Coca-Cola Bottlers for example, get more visibility? Could you think of any more events, concerts, charity etc.?

Even though the respondents seemed to feel that CCBI was very active in terms of participating in various events around Ireland they still managed to come up with great ideas of events CCBI has not sponsored or promoted. All of the respondents had listed a sporting event, which emphasizes the active role that CCBI has taken to advertise their products. CCBI already participates in various sporting events, but basketball is one sport that they have not been utilizing. It was suggested that CCBI could organise a street basketball tournament for the local schools. This would be a tournament that CCBI would also finance themselves. There could also be some intermediate programme, such as cheerleader dance shows, school bands playing, magic shows and much more, anything that would make the children participate more and to make them design their own exercises programmes and to show their talent. Keeping with the idea of magic shows, carnivals, circus and amusement parks could also be utilised by CCBI to promote their products.

CCBI could participate in trade shows, especially the ones designed for graduate students who are looking for work. This would make the company itself familiar to people who are interested in getting work within an international company and using their excellence to improve the quality of work of CCBI. New, fresh ideas are needed to keep the company on top and innovative ideas are useful in marketing where competition is very hard. Trade fairs are good for the company to receive publicity, entertainment and maintaining interest groups and customers. It is also an excellent way to build contacts with other companies, for example when trying to enter new markets. In trade fairs will most definitely meet potential customers and the fairs are used for gathering customer contact info. It is also an excellent way to find out what competitors are doing in order to keep up with them.

There should be a special team designed for CCBI to travel through Europe, participating in every major festival and event there is to explore. There could be 2-4 groups with 3-5 people and at the end of the summer they could get together and compare their experiences and develop the activities for the CD Team. This is not to copy and steal ideas but to come up with more innovative ones and to get inspired by what has been seen and experienced. It might even able CCBI to make new connections and co-operations which could be extremely beneficial for the company.

There are many advertisements that CCBI has targeted for young female, for example the Diet Coke Silver Bottle –campaign and the Mini Coca-Cola that has been advertised to fit a small hand bag. Thus there should be something where the target would be young men or men in general. A great place for a campaign like this would be car exhibitions. CCBI could for example launch a campaign where everyone who test drives a similar jeep that the CD Team has gets a free bottle of Coke, Sprite, PowerAde or whichever brand is considered to be the best suited for a campaign like this.

Is it important to get feedback from the consumers and have you ever been given any?

The respondents were unanimous when it came to the importance of receiving feedback from consumers. It is very important to listen to consumers' opinions and feedback, both positive and negative, since they are the ones buying CCBI's products. Most of the feedback seems to come from the organizers of the various events and not from the

consumers. Usually the feedback has been positive, such as that the CD Team has done great work organizing a certain venue, branding has been admirable and the behaviour of the members has been excellent. Not much has been said about the products itself. Getting feedback from the consumers is vital for the CCBI in order for them to be able to improve their products and advertising if necessary. Especially when a new flavour is being introduced to the public it is very important to know what everybody is thinking about it and would it be profitable to start producing it on everyday basis. For example, during the summer of 2006 CCBI introduced a new flavour of Fanta called Fanta Apple and sampled it within the employees of CCBI first to know whether it was worth taking the risk of introducing it to the consumers.

Feedback is important for the members of the CD Team because they want to know whether they are doing their work well or if there is any chance of improvement in the service they are offering. The feedback that CD Team receives is mostly direct because most of it is gotten while working in the field. The only real evaluation happens on the field because that is where the service is experienced. Straight feedback is considered to be good, because then the consumers are able to explain themselves what they really think about the products. Consumer feedback is probably best when gotten from the consumer directly and the CD Team should be able to receive and process the feedback straight from the end consumer in for example the events. If there is any negative feedback it needs to be carefully weighed and not everything should be taken personally. The customer could just be having a bad day which has nothing to do with the one offering the service. The negative feedback has to be turned positive immediately because of word-of-mouth. It is a well-known fact that bad news travel faster than good ones.

In my opinion all the feedback received, whether it is from the event organisers, customers, or the management itself, is important. There is no way to know what and how to improve if there is no constructive feedback. Even negative feedback can be constructive as one can learn from it. If there would be no mistakes, there would be no development, at least not as rapid as when the development springs from feedback.

If you have something on your mind that you think could have any significance to this research please feel free to continue below.

Only two of the respondents had written some additional information on the answer sheets. It was pointed out that the CD Team also supplies temp staff for the rest of the company, such as Finance, Human Resources, Sales, PR etc., as it was also mentioned earlier in this research. It is a great asset for CCBI as this cost less than agency temp staff and the CD Team already knows the company and how it operates, their values and attitudes which make them fit in better in the various departments. They are already part of the company, thus there are no need for introductions which also saves time for both the employer and employee.

The other issue that was mentioned was the importance to remember the significance of give away-products, such as towels, key rings, bottle openers, t-shirts, glasses etc. This is valuable for CCBI because these additional commodities act as a reminder of the actual products for the consumers. It is also a nice way to say thank you to loyal customers, to reward them for their belief in CCBI's brands and the company itself.

There is at least one issue that needs improvement within the CD Team. It is the Team Leaders responsibility to assign the various activities to the Team members and sometimes they are not dealt equally, as some of the members have more work than others. I know for a fact that there have been many cases where the Team members have been unsatisfied about the amount of work they have received. There seemed to be favourites, as to who got what assignments. This was not considered fair because it was up to the Team Leaders to make sure everyone had work. It must be hard controlling a group of 20 young employees but it is given that no one can be favoured over others when it comes to the division of labour between workers. This only creates distress which affects the work atmosphere.

Analysis of the Research Results

There were not any real differences between the responses based on the age and gender of the respondents. The only issue that could be seen was that the female gave more opinions and in-depth knowledge than male. This might be because the female had

more to say or then purely because the male were not interested in answering to the questionnaire. Despite of the given answers the response rate was fairly low, 65 per cent, which comes to being 13 out of total 20 members.

It was clearly stated in every response the importance of the CD Team for CCBI. There are many benefits that the team brings to CCBI; everyone thought it is only a plus to have an entire team promoting their products, especially since their competition, such as Pepsi Co, does not have a team like this. It is seen as a competitive advantage as it improves brand image and gives visibility for CCBI's brands. The visibility is received through sponsorship of various events, jeeps and uniforms. The CD Team offers good customer service, which is important for both the consumers and CCBI itself since it is also backing up their mission statements. The team brings profit to CCBI as they increase the sales during various events. They also help other departments within CCBI, therefore there is no need to hire more staff or use temp agencies as it is cheaper and easier to use the members of the CD Team. It also saves time to have this team because all the promotions and merchandising is done by the team members, the actual sales and public relations departments can use their time and energy on executing more important, demanding issues, which do not belong to the CD Teams responsibilities. There is a strong need for the CD Team and the reasons are already listed above. There are so many other activities within the CCBI that it is a wise strategic decision to have an in-house promotional team, which takes care of the execution of promotional campaigns, events and merchandising.

It was surprising how much the team members were thinking of the consumers in almost every aspect of their work. The consumers were mentioned in every answer of every question. This also shows the importance of consumers' opinions to the CCBI as they have always stated that the service begins with the customers. The respondents' opinions were strongly divided when it came to the importance of prior knowledge in marketing and promotions. Most of the members are business students, thus the answers were expected to state the importance of prior knowledge, even though the activities are fairly easy to learn and can be reasoned with common sense. The most surprising answers were the ones gotten about sponsorships. The CD Team members clearly share CCBI's views on the importance of sponsorships. It is important to give back to the community and show the consumers that they are respected and important value for the

company. There were a lot of suggestions for new events that CCBI could utilize, such as trade shows, carnivals, and car exhibitions. This shows that the team members are clearly thinking about the development of the events and campaigns that they are executing.

Only two of the respondents had come up with some additional issues which they considered to be important. First one was the help that CD Team provides for the other departments within CCBI. This saves money and time because there is no need to instruct a new employee or to pay for a temp agency for hiring more staff. This was considered important for CCBI as the Team members are more committed to the company, thus they bring more value and take the work seriously. The second issue was the give away –products, such as key rings, towels, t-shirts, caps, toys and such. These products reinforce consumers' opinions and create a positive image of the CCBI. It is important to care for loyal customers.

The only negative issue was the division of work assignments between the CD Team members. The Team Leaders are not being that fair because they seem to be using the same people in certain events and assignments. This causes distraction and resentment within the workplace.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

The basic starting scenario for the bachelor's thesis was the CD Team of CCBI. The work within the team was interesting and enjoyable thus it seemed to be a good target for a deeper research. This research was set out with the process of finding out what benefits it brought for the company and how the members of the CD Team were experiencing the need for this type of promotional team. By researching the team it was thought to find out whether everything was working efficiently or if there were room for any improvements but due to limitations of this research this question was not solved. During this whole process it was taken into account that the CD Team is working in

Ireland while the research was done from Finland, thus the communication was difficult from time to time and the needed information was not easy to gather. This made it a long process to research the CD Team and it truly was a struggle to receive even the small amount of responses that finally were sent back.

The theoretical part examines the various assignments of the CD Team through integrated marketing communications. The different parts of the integrated marketing communications mix are explained in detail to give a proper overview of what the CD Team does in reality. The text addresses for example the ethical issues concerning integrated marketing communications and the environment as these have a great impact on CCBI's company policies. A variety of sources including articles, text books and Internet sources were used to ensure the up to date theoretical research. The theoretical part provided a good base for the empirical study.

The actual study was conducted as an open-ended questionnaire which was sent via email. The questions concentrated on examining the opinions and experiences of the members of the CD Team. The questionnaire was sent back and forth couple of times since the management of CCBI did not approve all of the questions. The results revealed that everyone seemed to have good understanding of the work the CD Team carries out and they understand the importance of their own contribution for the promotion of the CCBI brands. The main findings stated that experience is not a necessity as the quality of the service is considered to be more valuable. The CD Team is seen as an important part of the CCBI as it allows the promotional work to be done efficiently and with careful consideration towards the planning and implementation of the events. It brings many benefits to CCBI, not all of them measured financially but in the light of trust, loyalty and commitment. It was also noticeable that the Team members have in-depth knowledge about the consumers and their desires as they are the face of the company and the first contact with CCBI.

There were many setbacks during this research which all affected the reliability of this study. The management of CCBI limited the research so that it was only allowed to interview the CD Team, not management itself or the other departments of CCBI. They would have added to the value of this research as they have crucial information about the true benefits of the team and the work they implement. Finnish beverage companies

were contacted to find out whether they are using the same methods in their marketing and promotions but unfortunately they declined to share their strategies with external interest groups. Thus this research became small-scale.

The CCBI rejected some of the questionnaires because they did not want any negative issues to be revealed with this research. As a recommendation for CCBI it is stated that if they do not want any outside interest groups to find out about their weaknesses they should conduct a research by themselves. This would be important for them in order to know what could be enhanced or changed as there is always room for improvements. The CCBI should listen to the CD Team members, since they are the ones who are serving the consumers and in contact with them. Team members also implement some of the CCBI's marketing strategies during the events and it has been experienced that everything does not always work according to the plans. At times it can be valuable to pay attention to the employees and find out what can be done in order to improve the work atmosphere. As it was said before, the Team Leaders do not always divide the work evenly between the Team members. Now this is an excellent example of the importance of feedback. The members have not said anything to the management and the management is not asking anything, thus they are unaware that some of the Team members are unsatisfied with the situation and nothing is done to improve this situation.

The CD Team members listed events which could be included to CCBI's events, such as sporting tournament, trade fairs and car exhibitions. This is also a good reason why CCBI should conduct a research, or at least organise a proper feedback session in order to utilise the Team members. They have good, functional ideas which could be well implemented by the CCBI. Now CCBI is not using the CD Team up to their full potential, but ignoring them as a source of vital information concerning the consumers, marketing strategies and new ideas.

Because in the beginning there were so many objectives, which in time were failed to research, it is only common to have many ideas about further research that sprung from this thesis. The Finnish beverage companies could be contacted and a marketing research on their behalf could be done. It might compare the results of this research to their marketing strategies to find out if the same type of promotional team could work in Finland. Also the Finnish consumers could be researched in order to see if they would

have the need for greater promotions. The management of CCBI could also be contacted to see if they would be willing to reveal more about their strategies and functions if a different approach to the subject was taken.

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APPENDIX 1

I am currently writing my dissertation for my college in Finland, Satakunta University of Applied Sciences, and will be using Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland CD Team as a case study. I would appreciate it if you took the time to fill in this questionnaire, as it would be of great help for my research. You can return the completed questionnaire to the Team Leaders or send it to me by email to: marianne_vataja@hotmail.com

Please return the completed questionnaire by October 9th 2006 at the latest.

Thank you in advance, Marianne Vataja.

1. What age are you? _____ 2. Female/Male? _____

3. How long have you been working for CCBI in CD Team?

4. Are you satisfied with your own work in CD Team? Why, why not?

5. Are you satisfied of the way work is being divided amongst the team members?

Please specify your answer.

6. Do you feel the work atmosphere in CD Team is satisfying? Please specify your answer.

7. What are your thoughts concerning the management of the team, including Team Leaders? Please specify your answer.

8. If you were part of management, is there something you would do differently? If yes, please specify.

9. Do you feel it is easy for consumers to give feedback to the CD Team? Why?

10. Do you feel that by having a CD Team CCBI has a competitive advantage over its competitors? Please specify your answer.

11. Do you think CD Team covers enough events around Ireland? If not, what would you change?

If you have something on your mind that you think could have any significance to this research please feel free to continue below.

APPENDIX 2

I am currently writing my bachelor's thesis for my college in Finland, Satakunta University of Applied Sciences, and will be using Coca-Cola Bottlers CD Team as a case study. I would appreciate it if you took the time to fill in this questionnaire, as it would be of great help for my research. You can return the completed questionnaire to me by email: marianne_vataja@hotmail.com or leave it with the team leaders.

Please return the completed questionnaire by April 26th 2007 at the latest.

Thank you in advance, Marianne Vataja.

1. What age are you? _____ 2. Female/Male?

3. Why do you think it is important for companies, like Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland for example, to have a CD Team or something similar to promote their products?

4. When working in a team like CD Team do you think it is important to have prior knowledge about marketing, sales and promotion? Please specify your answer.

5. What are your opinions on how companies can affect consumers buying habits when catering different events and concerts?

6. Do you find it important for companies to sponsor these different types of events?
Please specify your answer.

7. Does sponsorship marketing have any impact on your buying behavior? Why do you think it is so?

8. Do you feel that by having a CD Team Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland has a competitive advantage over their competitors? Please specify your answer.

9. How could a company, like Coca-Cola Bottlers for example, get more visibility?
Could you think of any more events, concerts, charity etc.?

10. Is it important to get feedback from the consumers and have you ever been given any?

If you have something on your mind that you think could have any significance to this research please feel free to continue below.

APPENDIX 3

Arvoisa (Hartwallin/Sinebrychoffin edustaja),

Olen viimeisen vuoden opiskelija Satakunnan Ammattikorkeakoulussa Liiketalouden Rauman yksikössä. Olen kirjoittamassa opinnäytetyötäni ja toivoin saavani teidän apuanne sen tekemisessä.

Viime kesänä työskentelin Coca-Cola Bottlersille Dublinissa, Irlannissa. He ovat perustaneet oman promootiotiimin, Consumer Demand Team. Tiimissä työskentelee maksimissaan 20 nuorta johtoportaan alaisuudessa, ja heidän tehtävänä on markkinoida Coca-Colaa ja muita saman brändin alle lukeutuvia tuotteita, kuten esimerkiksi Fanta, Sprite, Riverrock, Dr Pepper ja PowerAde. Teimme promootiohommia supermarketeissa, festivaaleilla, sekä erinäisissä urheilutapahtumissa. Teimme myös sijaisuuksia Coca-Colan muilla osastoilla, kuten henkilöstö-, myynti-, ja rahoitus, sekä varastoinnin puolella. Tiimin tarkoituksena on tuoda Coca-Colalle ja muille tuotteille näkyvyyttä sekä lisätä positiivisia assosiaatioita yritykseen itseensä. He tekevät myös hyväntekeväisyyspauksia, ovat osa siistimmän luonnon puolesta -kampanjaa ja järjestävät peli-iltamia lähion nuorille.

Olenkin nyt tekemässä opinnäytetyötäni Consumer Demand tiimistä ja sen tuomista hyödyistä yritykselle. Yritän saada aihettani linkitettyä Suomeen jotta saisin työstäni ajankohtaisemman. Näin ollen toivoisin Teidän löytävän hieman aikaa vastata sähköpostiini liittämään kyselyyni ja täten edesauttaa minua opinnäytetyöni kirjoittamisessa.

Kiitos jo näin etukäteen.

Ystävällisin terveisin,

Marianne Vataja

Markkinointikysely

1. Toimiiko teillä samanlainen/vastaavanlainen promootiotiimi Sinebrychoffin palveluksessa? (Mikäli vastauksenne on kielteinen, siirrykää kysymykseen 8.)

kyllä ei

2. Miten kauan kyseinen tiimi on ollut toiminnassa?

3. Mikä on kyseisen tiimin toimenkuva?

4. Kuinka monta henkeä tiimissänne työskentelee?

5. Voitteko mainita tapahtumia jossa olette olleet mukana?

6. Mitä etuja kyseinen tiimi tuo Sinebrychoffille? (esim. uusia asiakkaita, näkyvyyttä yms.)

7. Oletteko koskaan harkinneet perustavanne promootiotiimiä? Mikäli näin on, niin lyhyt perustelu miksi ei toteutunut?

8. Hoituuko tämänkaltainen promootio jonkin toisen yrityksen kautta? Onko mahdollista mainita mikä yritys on kyseessä?

9. Perusteluja miksi on päätetty käyttää toista yritystä promootioon?

11. Millaisia kilpailukeinoja hyödynnätte juomien markkinoinnissa?

Kiitos vastauksistanne.

Dear (representative of Hartwall/Sinebrychoff),

I am a fourth year student in the Satakunta University of Applied Sciences. I study International Business and Marketing Logistics. I am writing my Bachelors thesis and was hoping to receive you're help in completing my research.

During last summer I was working in a Consumer Demand Team for a company called Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland. They are situated in Naas Road 12, Dublin, Ireland. In this promotional team they have maximum 20 young people working under management. The team is to market and promote Coca-Cola and other products within the brands belonging to Coca-Cola, such as Sprite, Fanta, Riverrock water, Dr Pepper and PowerAde. This team promoted these products in supermarkets, festivals and in various sporting events. The team also provides help in different departments of Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland, including Finance, Sales, Human Resources and warehouse departments. The aim of this team is to bring visibility for Coca-Cola and other brands, as well as increase consumers' positive associations with the company itself. Consumer demand Team also organizes events for charity, to help the community.

I am doing my thesis about Consumer Demand Team and the various benefits it brings for Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland. I am trying to link my research to Finland, which would make my research more valuable. I was hoping you would take the time to answer the questionnaire included with this letter and thus help me progress with my research.

Thank you in advance.

Sincerely yours,
Marianne Vataja

Marketing Questionnaire

1. Do you have a similar Demand Team working for Hartwall/Sinebrychoff as mentioned in the letter of this questionnaire? (If not, please move to question 7, please.)

yes no

2. How long have you had this team working for you?

3. What is the job description of this team?

4. How many people you have working in this team?

5. Could you mention some events that you have been involved with?

6. What benefits this team brings to your company? (For example, new customers, visibility, etc.)

7. Have you ever considered establishing a promotional team? If this is so, please write a short explanation why it did not come true.

8. Will this type of promotion be handled by an external company? Is it possible to mention the company in question?

9. Reasons for why it has been chosen to use an external company?

10. What kind of competitive strategies are you utilizing in marketing beverages?

Thank you in advance for you're answers.