

ENERGY DRINK MARKETING TO TEENS: 2010 TO 2013

July 29, 2013

In 2011, researchers at the Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity conducted a comprehensive analysis of beverage marketing, *Sugary Drink FACTS: Evaluating Sugary Drink Nutrition and Marketing to Youth*.¹ That study identified significant amounts of energy drink marketing targeted to teens (ages 12-17). Due to recent evidence of substantial health hazards for teens who consume energy drinks,^{2,3} the American Medical Association adopted a policy to support a ban on marketing of high stimulant/caffeine drinks to adolescents under age 18.⁴ This report examines data on energy drink marketing to teens in 2012 and early 2013⁵ and compares them to findings from the 2011 report to determine whether companies have changed their marketing practices in light of these concerns.

Advertising spending in all media

Advertising spending on all energy drink brands totaled \$281.8 million in 2012, an increase of 71% versus 2010 and 2.5 times 2008 spending. Three existing brands increased spending – 5-Hour Energy, Red Bull, and NOS – and two new brands advertised in 2012. Kraft Foods introduced Mio Energy “drops” as part of its Mio drink mix line to be added to other beverages.⁶ Although one drop contains a relatively small amount of caffeine (60 mg), each bottle contains 18 servings totaling 1,080 mg of caffeine. Another new product, Street King Energy, is touted as “a better source of energy,” but contains a very high 280 mg of caffeine in one 2.5-oz shot.⁷

Advertising spending by energy drink brands: 2008 to 2012

Company	Brand	Advertising spending (\$000)			% change 2010-2012
		2008	2010	2012 (% TV)	
Innovation Ventures	5-Hour Energy (shots)	\$51,545	\$107,010	\$194,620 (96%)	+82%
Red Bull GMBH	Red Bull	\$41,719	\$25,974	\$56,086 (94%)	+116%
Kraft Foods	Mio Energy (drink mix)	--	--	\$16,347 (99%)	New product
Street King LLC	Street King	--	--	\$6,239 (99%)	New product
Coca-Cola	NOS	\$79	\$1,828	\$5,218 (99%)	+185%
PepsiCo	Amp	\$18,882	\$13,608	\$1,389 (0%)	-90%

Source: Nielsen, 2013

Other brands with less than \$1 million in TV advertising in 2012 include: Zipfizz (Enfission Inc., \$603k); Full Throttle (Coca-Cola Co, \$588k), Hydrive (Inov8 Beverage Co, \$434k); Monster (Hansen Beverage Co, \$158k); Rockstar (Rockstar Inc, \$56k); RevHoney (RevHoney Inc, \$45k); and Turbo Power Energy (Biorite Nutritionals, \$10k).

Advertising on television

Teens’ total exposure to energy drink advertising on TV increased by 33% in 2012 compared with 2010. In addition to advertising for new products, teens viewed more ads for 5-Hour Energy, Red Bull, and NOS in 2012 than they had in 2010. Teens also saw 31% more ads for Red Bull than adults saw, 44% more ads for Street King, and approximately the same number of 5-Hour Energy ads, even though teens watch 25% less television than adults do.

Teen exposure to TV advertising for energy drink brands: 2008 to 2012

Brand	Avg # ads viewed by teens (12-17 years)			% change	Teen:adult ⁸ ratio
	2008	2010	2012	2010-2012	2012
5-Hour Energy	60.3	104.6	113.2	+8%	1.02
Red Bull	22.5	14.5	29.0	+100%	1.31
Mio Energy	--	--	14.1	New product	.72
Street King	--	--	7.7	New product	1.44
NOS/Full Throttle	--	0.2	0.6	+200%	.42

Source: Nielsen, 2013

Children's (ages 2-11) total exposure to TV ads also increased in 2012 versus 2010. Children saw on average 47 ads for 5-Hour Energy, 11 ads for Red Bull, 6 ads for Mio Energy, and 2 ads for Street King.

Examination of the networks where energy drink ads appeared confirms that 5-Hour Energy, Red Bull, and Street King continued to place a high proportion of advertising on programs viewed by most by teens, including Adult Swim, MTV, and MTV2.

Youth exposure to TV advertising for energy drink brands by distributor in 2012⁹

Brand	Distributor ¹⁰	Ads viewed			Teen:adult ratio ¹¹
		2-11 years	12-14 years	15-17 years	
5-Hour Energy	Total	45.9	104.6	121.5	1.02
	Adult Swim	13.5	33.6	31.6	2.33
	MTV	2.3	11.4	14.3	2.04
	20th Television (syndicated)	5.2	11.3	13.1	1.10
	Comedy Central	1.5	7.8	11.9	1.20
	MTV2	0.9	4.0	5.2	2.26
	Spike	2.2	3.7	4.8	0.73
	BET	1.6	3.3	4.0	1.23
	TBS	1.2	2.8	3.7	0.72
	ESPN	1.4	2.2	3.6	0.51
	Warner Brothers (syndicated)	1.7	3.0	3.3	0.67
	NBC	0.8	1.1	2.3	0.40
	History Channel	1.1	1.9	2.2	0.56
	FX	0.7	1.4	1.9	0.76
	Red Bull	Total	10.6	26.4	31.1
20th Television (syndicated)		2.8	6.0	6.1	1.36
Adult Swim		2.6	6.0	5.4	2.39
TRU		0.9	1.8	1.8	0.81
USA		1.4	2.1	1.7	0.90
NBC Universal (syndicated)		0.8	1.3	1.6	0.51
ESPN2		0.6	0.8	1.4	0.37

	MTV	0.7	3.8	4.9	1.93
	MTV2	0.5	2.0	3.3	2.14
	TBS	0.7	1.9	2.6	0.93
	Comedy Central	0.3	1.2	1.8	1.18
	ESPN	0.5	0.8	1.3	0.58
Mio Energy	Total	6.2	12.2	15.9	0.72
	FX	0.6	1.1	1.7	0.84
	MTV	0.3	1.1	1.5	1.12
	Spike	0.6	1.0	1.5	0.69
Street King	Total	1.8	6.8	8.5	1.44
	MTV	0.6	2.4	2.8	2.02
	Comedy Central	0.2	1.5	2.2	1.34
	MTV2	0.2	1.0	1.2	2.44

Source: Nielsen, 2013

Advertising on the internet

Average monthly teen visitors to 5HourEnergy.com, RedBull.com, and DrinkNOS.com increased from 2010 to 2012, while teen visitors to MonsterEnergy.com and Rockstar.com declined. Teens were 50% more likely to visit DrinkNOS.com compared with adults and also more likely to visit MonsterEnergy.com and 5HourEnergy.com.

Teen visitors to energy drink websites: 2010 to 2012					
Avg # unique visitors per month (12-17 years)					
Company	Website	2010	2012	% change 2010-2012	Composition index: Teens
Hansen Beverage Co.	MonsterEnergy.com	23.3	19.5	-16%	107
Innovation Ventures	5HourEnergy.com	13.2	19.4	+47%	102
Red Bull GMBH	RedBull.com	11.8	12.6	+7%	73
Coca-Cola Co	DrinkNOS.com	1.7	9.3	+447%	154
Rockstar	Rockstar69.com	5.1	3.2	-37%	95

Source: comScore, 2013

Numbers of children (2-11 years) visiting these websites were low, averaging 1,200 unique child visitors per month (to MonsterEnergy.com) or less. RedBull.com had the highest number of average monthly visits per visitor (1.4), while MonsterEnergy.com had the highest average minutes per visit (4.8).

Three brands that had not used display advertising in 2010 began to advertise on other websites: NOS, Monster, and Street King. However, all brands that had advertised on third-party websites in 2010 reduced their display advertising, and Venom eliminated internet advertising altogether. Although Full Throttle reduced display advertising in 2012, 27% of these ads were placed on youth-targeted websites.

Display advertising for energy drink brands on third-party websites: 2010 to 2012

Company	Brand	Avg # ad views per month (000)		% change 2010-2012	% ads viewed in 2012 on	
		2010	2012		Youth websites ¹²	Facebook
Red Bull GMBH	Red Bull	456,915	65,088	-86%	2%	28%
Coca-Cola	NOS	--	16,869	No 2010 ads	0%	60%
PepsiCo	Amp	186,667	2,460	-99%	0%	74%
Hansen Beverage Co	Monster	--	1,915	No 2010 ads	1%	37%
Coca-Cola	Full Throttle	8,683	1,314	-85%	27%	0%
SK Energy Shots	Street King	--	198	New product	--	--
Dr Pepper Snapple Group	Venom	20,938	--	-100%	--	--

Source: comScore, 2013

One-third of all display advertisements for energy drinks (averaging 31.2 million per month) appeared on Facebook. ESPN.com was the second most common placement for energy drink ads (averaging 7.8 million per month), followed by Google sites, including YouTube.com (averaging 6.4 million per month).

Social media marketing

Most energy drink brands have shifted much of their internet marketing to social media, evidenced by enormous growth in Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube reach for all brands. In all three social media, Red Bull was by far the most active, followed by Monster.

Social media activity for energy drink brands: 2011 to 2013

Brand	Facebook likes (000)			Twitter followers (000)		
	June, 2011	July, 2013	% growth	June, 2011	July, 2013	% growth
Red Bull	20,462.1	39,291.4	+92%	223.5	1,082.9	+385%
Monster	11,238.5	23,331.4	+108%	75.5	758.3	+904%
Rockstar	924.7	1,975.2	+114%	17.9	114.3	+539%
Amp	209.1	543.8	+160%	7.9	15.5	+96%
Street King	--	524.3	New product	--	38.3	New product
NOS	57.9	176.3	+204%	--	5.5	No 2010 acct
5-Hour Energy	32.3	73.2	+127%	1.5	6.4	+327%
Full Throttle	--	--	--	--	5.8	No 2010 acct
Brand	YouTube upload views (000)			YouTube videos posted		
	June, 2011	July, 2013	% growth	2011	2012	2013
Red Bull	158,344.0	598,593.5	278%	n/a	528 ¹³	520
Monster	10,776.9	53,693.7	398%	241	36	14
Rockstar	--	4,914.2	No 2010 site	116	102	44
Amp	330.7	903.7	173%	3	28	9
Street King	--	168.3	New product	2	6	0
NOS	699.2	3,011.2	331%	7	6	3
5-Hour Energy	199.3	40,268.7	20,100%	8	15	14
Full Throttle	--	166.3	No 2010 site	104	0	0

*Source: Analysis of social media websites as of July, 2013

Energy drink brands posted to their Facebook pages on average 244 times each from January 1 to July 15, 2013 (1.3 times per day). The most active Facebook pages were Monster (437 posts), Rockstar (389 posts), and 5-Hour Energy (345 posts), whereas Street King and NOS posted just twice per week (62 and 70 posts, respectively). Most brands were more active on Twitter. From June 16 to July 15, 2013, Red Bull tweeted 2,040 times (68 tweets per day); Rockstar, 5-Hour Energy, and Monster each tweeted 5 to 8 times per day; and all others tweeted 2 to 3 times daily. Of note, Full Throttle has not tweeted since November 2012.

Conclusion

Energy drinks and shots can be dangerous for children and teens to consume, but many manufacturers continue to aggressively and inappropriately market these products. In fact, many brands appear to have increased marketing in venues where teens are likely to view them. Regulations to limit the sales and marketing of energy drinks to children under 18 may be warranted, and such oversight would be supported by parents, the medical community, and others who advocate for children's health.¹⁴

This document was prepared by Jennifer L. Harris, PhD, MBA. The research was funded by grants from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Rudd Foundation.

Endnotes

¹Harris JL, Schwartz MB, Brownell KD, Javadizadeh J, Weinberg M, et al. (2011). Sugary Drink FACTS: Evaluating sugary drink marketing to youth. Available at www.sugarydrinkfacts.org.

²Pomeranz JL, Munsell CR, Harris JL (2013). Energy drinks: An emerging public health hazard for youth. *Journal of Public Health Policy*, 34(2), 254-271.

³American Academy of Pediatrics (2011). Sports drinks and energy drinks for children and adolescents: Are they appropriate? *Pediatrics*, 127(6), 1182-1189.

⁴American Medical Association (2013, June 18). AMA adopts new policies on second day of voting at annual meeting. Press release. Available at <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/news/news/2013/2013-06-18-new-ama-policies-annual-meeting.page>.

⁵Data were obtained and analyses conducted using the same methods as the 2011 Sugary Drink FACTS report. For a detailed description of these methods, please refer to pp. 19-31 of that report. Available at www.sugarydrinkfacts.org.

⁶www.makeitmio.com/mio-energy

⁷www.skenergyshots.com

⁸Ads viewed by teens (12-17 years)/Ads viewed by adults (18-49 years)

⁹For details of the methods used in this analysis, please refer to the Yale Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity fact sheet, Adolescent-targeted television advertising for energy drinks. Available at

yaleruddcenter.org/resources/upload/docs/what/advertising/TVAdvertising_EnergyDrinks_2010.pdf

¹⁰Includes all distributors with >1.25 ads viewed (125 GRPs) by individuals in any youth age group

¹¹Ads viewed by teens (12-17 years)/Ads viewed by adults (18-49 years)

¹²Youth websites met one of two conditions: 1) comScore identified it as an entertainment website for youth (2-17 years) during the first three quarters of 2012; or 2) the proportion of youth visitors to the website exceeded the total percent of youth visitors to the internet in the given month.

¹³Due to the high number of videos on Red Bull's YouTube channel, the site only listed videos uploaded in the past year (since July, 2012).

¹⁴Pomeranz et al. (2013).